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CONVERSATIONS IN A STUDIO

BY

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY
D. C. L. (OXON.)

VOLUME I.

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CONVERSATIONS IN A STUDIO.

I.

Belton. Did you read the account of the last sale of pictures and china at auction in Paris?

Mallett. Yes; and it struck me that the prices which some of them brought were enormous.

B. What struck me more than anything was, that the modern pictures brought such high prices. One expects the works of the old masters to bring large prices. Time itself has added value to them. They are comparatively rare, and every day they are diminished in number by accidents of every kind. There is a factitious value attached to them beyond their real and undoubted merit. They are sealed with the stamp of Fame. Centuries have gone by since they were painted. Generation after generation has praised and copied them; and one feels secure, in purchasing an undoubted original by Titian, Raffaelle, or any of the great masters, that, beyond the delight it will give, it is a safe investment. It is not very probable that the verdict of centuries will suddenly be reversed, and that they will lose the estimation in which they are held.

M. I am not quite so sure of that. Tastes change very rapidly, and pictures which were highly esteemed fifty or thirty years ago are now looked at with a cold, critical, and inauspicious eye. We can each of us remember when Guido was a great name, and when his pictures stood in the first rank. He has certainly fallen very much from his pride of place. We are getting more critical and fastidious, and a new taste is growing up. Prices indeed have risen, and a good picture of his would probably bring nearly if not quite as much as it would have done twenty years ago; but relatively he has very much fallen in the scale.

B. What do you say, then, of Carlo Dolce, — Charles Sweet, — as I like to translate his name into English, it so truly expresses his feebleness? He used to hold a certain rank among distinguished names, but I suppose the universal verdict now would be, that he was a very weak and mannered painter — without imagination, feeling, or sense of color.

M. True; and will not the same change take place in the popular estimate of our modern artists? Many a name which now stands very high will vanish out of sight, and some, perhaps, who are undervalued at present will steadily grow in reputation.

B. Fashion has a great deal to do with success, and humbug, perhaps, even more. Prices depend on names quite as much as on merit. Fortunes are made every day by men who have no taste, but

who think it is "the thing" (that is the slang) to have a gallery of art, and all they want are works by artists who have a name. They buy not from a love of art, and not from any enjoyment they expect to get from the works they buy, but because they come thus to be known and spoken of, and envied as the owners of works that are valued by the world.

M. Even more: some of these new millionaires, I am told, prefer to give extravagant prices for works of art. It gives an *éclat* to their names; society talks about them, — asks who they are and wonders at their extravagance, — and thus their riches are placed in high relief before the world; and they become known and issue from obscurity.

B. I scarcely believe these reports. You must take them *cum grano salis.* Why should not a new rich man, who has made his own money, have as much enjoyment out of art as any one? Those who want the pictures and can't afford to buy them raise this outcry and invent these stories — in part at least — and scandal is always ready to gild and embroider the flattest and tamest facts. Taste and feeling are innate. They may be cultivated undoubtedly, but all the cultivation will be of little avail without the natural sentiment — while the natural sentiment will go a good way even without cultivation. Besides, the very buying of pictures begets cultivation. The man who begins by admiring a colored print will soon tire of it and replace it with something better; and better will

beget better. There is always a chance that the admirer of a chromo-lithograph will finally long for a Titian. Let us be glad to see an interest in anything belonging to art. Nothing is so hopeless as utter indifference. Any picture on the wall is better than none. If there be real feeling and susceptibility in the man, the bad will soon bore him, and he will insensibly begin to be cultivated in his taste. He will compare what he has with what others have, and so gradually reform his taste.

M. Do you remember the story of Jefferson J. Q. Shoddy of New York? After suddenly making his fortune, he endeavored to enlighten his mind and enlarge his experience by traveling in Europe. He was accompanied by a person whom he was pleased to call his "lady," and they visited together all the famous cities and galleries, and learned the names of many artists of whose existence they had never heard before. A noble desire at last possessed Shoddy to become the owner of a great picture by a great name; and by one of those singular chances which sometimes occur, fortune favored him. He made the acquaintance, through his valet, of Prince Comesichiama, a gentleman of most illustrious family, who had married into the equally illustrious family of the Chilosas, and who was possessed of a remarkable picture, which his valet insinuated that perhaps the Prince might as a great favor be willing to sell, as he unfortunately had made a bad speculation lately, and

was for the moment in want of ready money. The matter, however, required great care in the negotiation, as well as absolute secrecy. Finally, however, the Prince was prevailed upon, despite his pride and his natural unwillingness to part with an heirloom which for centuries had graced the walls of his ancestral palace, and partly in consequence of a certain general fondness for "questi cari Americani," and a special liking he had conceived for *questo caro* Shoddy, to part with the picture for a high price, but on condition of absolute secrecy; for, as the Prince said, "What would my family say if they knew that I had sold this heirloom, so long the pride of my house?" Shoddy did not know how to answer this imposing question, and could not imagine what they would say; but he promised not to tell, and he bought the picture, and like an honest man paid down his gold, after he had been assured in a lofty tone by the Prince that he did not understand what Shoddy meant by "currency." I am afraid that Shoddy paid a very large sum for it; "but then, you know," he said, in a solemn whisper, "it is the real thing and no mistake, and in such perfect preservation that you might think it had been painted last week. There ain't a crack on it, or a single spot that ain't as fresh as the day it was painted. I was a lucky fellow to get it at all. At one time I thought the Prince would n't let me have it at any price; but I got it at last. You just go up and see it, — Mrs Shoddy will be glad

to show it to you." So I went, and Mrs. Shoddy was very kind and she did show it to me. It was certainly a great picture — at least in one sense. "Ah!" I said; "yes! very striking!! very striking!!" I always say this when I don't know what else to say. I don't say how it strikes me, remember. "And who is it by, Mrs. Shoddy?" "Oh," said she, "it's by Gheedo — so Shoddy says; but who knows which of those old Italians painted it? But it's a large picture, is n't it? and they say it's very old; and I'm sure Shoddy paid enough money for it to be A, No. 1." "And what, may I ask, is the subject?" "Oh, the subject! it's Jupiter and Ten." "Jupiter and Ten!" I said, amazed. "I never heard of such a subject; are you sure?" "Of course I am," she answered. "But the name's written on the back, and you can see for yourself." So saying, she turned round the picture and showed it to me. Mrs. Shoddy was quite right, only her pronunciation was a little faulty. The subject written out plainly was this — JUPITER AND IO.

B. Nonsense! This is a base invention. Did you ever see the picture? Who was Shoddy?

M. An excellent fellow — honest, simple, and generous — rather reckless in his grammar, and a little vulgar in his manners, but not in his mind and heart. In the end Shoddy will have a good gallery of pictures, and enjoy them, too, which is more than many a prince does. He has a natural sense of refinement which needs only cultivation,

and he is cultivating it every day. Besides, he really loves art, and is ready to pay any money for what touches him. There is nothing mean about him. You shall have your laugh at him if you please; but let him also have his due of praise.

B. Oh, as long as Shoddy is really trying to cultivate his artistic sense, why should I laugh? There must be a beginning, and there is always hope of those who begin. There are Shoddys whose sole desire is for furniture, carpets, mirrors, upholstery, and bric-a-brac, and anything is better than that.

M. Yes, anything is better than mere upholstery. One can easily judge the taste and real feeling of a man by his house. Where you see only ornate furniture, and glaring carpets, and huge mirrors, you may be sure that there is something vulgar in the mind. Pictures and works of art are evidences of refinement and feeling. They show a desire for something ideal, and a sympathy for something poetic. Graspings, at least they are, after something better than the humdrum acts of life — blind struggles, perhaps, for light, as by plants in cellars; but still graspings and struggles after it, however unintelligent. But a room crowded and clustered merely with ormolu ornaments, knick-knackery, and upholstery, is a clear indication that those who live in it are essentially trivial and commonplace.

B. A house is but the shell of the creature that dwells in it, that each shapes according to its na-

ture; all the lines and involutions upon it are evidences of its life and habits; and the walls of human houses are not different in this respect from those of the shell-fish. Give me the shell, and I can tell you the creature that inhabited it — whether man or mollusc.

M. Do you remember those lines of Donne upon the snail? I quote from memory. They have little to do with what we are saying, but your words remind me of them: —

> "Be thou thine own home, and in thyself dwell;
> Inn anywhere; continuance maketh hell.
> And seeing the snail which everywhere doth roam,
> Carrying his own house still, still is at home —
> Follow (for he is easy-paced) this snail,
> Be thine own palace or the world 's thy jail."

B. No, I did not know them; they are very homely, quaint, and hearty.

M. They always had a certain charm for me — perhaps somewhat from old association. A very dear friend used to quote them — long, so long ago — and I hear her voice when I repeat them. But to return to what we were saying. Our houses are a part of ourselves. We scrawl our lives upon our walls. Sometimes I think the walls themselves retain the insensible impressions of the spirits that dwell in them, are haunted dimly by them, and influence even the new inhabitants in some subtle way.

B. However that may be — which I confess seems rather fantastic — it is quite true that walls

are great tell-tales. You can easily say whether a woman is a fool or not by her boudoir. If she thinks at all, there will be evidences of it in her surroundings. If she have any tastes, they will stamp themselves there. The ornaments, the pictures, the flowers, the books, the order, the disorder, the arrangement, — what is wanting as well as what is present, — all whisper the secret of her real nature. She has written herself and her history everywhere. I always look at her pictures to see what she has selected. These gauge her taste and feeling.

M. In the old houses where ancestral pictures look constantly down from the walls, they seem still to exercise an influence over the family; and those who have grown up among the silent people of Titian, Tintoret, or Vandyck cannot, I fancy, utterly fail to be gentlemen and ladies. Unconscious impressions are made which sink into the soul, and alter life.

B. You remember the story which Wilkie tells of the old monk in the Escurial, who, moralizing with him on the pictures which illustrated its walls, said that sometimes to him they seemed to be the substance, and we the shadows. I remember to have had the same strong impression made upon me once at a magnificent ball in one of the great London houses. Amid the buzz of conversation, the flashing of jewels, the rustling of rich dresses, and the motion to and fro of the living crowd, the silent, deathless portraits of some old Vene-

tians painted by Titian seemed to look down with such a calm superiority and majesty that the whole living scene appeared trivial and evanescent in their presence.

M. Yes; I have often in society been thus arrested by a grand portrait or a noble picture, and felt how serene that calm world of art is beside our hurry and confusion of life. While you are talking of some triviality of to-day that to-morrow will be gone like a puff of smoke, — while you are smiling and complimenting the beautiful face on which time will so soon lay its defacing touch, — while you are hearing the last scandal or *bon mot*, or sharply discussing the question of the hour, — you glance up and see one of the old, silent faces of Venice, dead and dust centuries ago, calmly gazing down upon you as with a look of pity; and you stop, and your fancy takes you away over time and space into other worlds: or, while the rain beats at the window-panes, and struggles like a living thing for entrance, you suddenly lose your hold on the present and float away into a dream-world of air and water, and sun and shadow, that Claude has fixed forever in a small square of canvas. Nature there does not fade. Smiles there live forever in those serene demesnes. Those then seem real presences, —

"Calm pleasures there abide majestic pains."

B. And sometimes, too, comes a sense of utter absurdity, when the walls show us, over the heads

of the young, delicate, and modest girls, and the old laced-up dandies, and the "fuss and feathers" of repaired dowagers, the rollicking extravagance of Rubens, with its sumptuous nakedness, and sprawling splendor of color. And sometimes, glancing over a splendid vase of hothouse flowers and fruit, we look into the interior of taverns, where the clumsy boors of Teniers are drinking, and feel a shock of surprise at their utter irrelevancy to the whole scene, and wonder, as Pope did about the flies in amber, how the deuce they ever could get there. The two worlds of art and reality are so near each other, and so separate, that they jar or charm as the mood strikes us.

M. Really to enjoy a work of art, one should see it alone. Galleries are confusing, like the buzz of a crowd. Titian elbowing Teniers is annoying. A Dance of Satyrs is an impertinence beside A Holy Family. Let us have *un' alla volta per carità*, as Figaro sings, and then we may really enjoy it. To feel and understand a picture or a statue, one should be *tête-à-tête* with it. Silence and isolation are necessary.

B. But of all things none is more annoying than the presence of a would-be connoisseur, who will insist on pointing out and descanting on a work of art, disturbing our free enjoyment, and forcing his opinion and criticism as a juggler forces a card. He is blood-cousin to the intolerable and pertinacious *valet de place* who bores you out of the galleries and churches on the Continent, spoils

for you all the sentiment and beauty of the place, and will not let you alone to enjoy anything after your own fashion. I confess I sometimes feel that I would rather "rot in ignorance" than be thus led about like a tame bear. I must enjoy things after my own fashion, and not have information pumped into me constantly. I like to absorb places and pictures; and this is my way of getting an intimate knowledge of them. After you have got the feeling, the facts all fall into harmony; but all the facts will not afford a key to the feeling, without which the place or the picture is soulless.

M. Can anything be more irritating than these *valets de place?* The other day I was wandering about the Academy at Venice, enjoying the pictures after my own fashion, — a poor one, but mine own, — when, on entering the Hall of the Assumption, I saw a group of Americans, attended by their *valet de place*, who were "doing the gallery." They were nobly determined to know everything, to see everything, to bag all possible facts, and to store the empty space of what they were pleased to call their mind. The group was composed of two young girls and their ancient and rather unkempt father The girls were seated and writing down in note-books the amazing information, all more or less wrong, detailed to them by the valet, — the age of Titian, where he was born, and when he died, — when this picture was painted, what its beauties were, what it represented, and so on. And as he recounted his facts in exceedingly broken

English — broken, in fact, all to pieces — they glanced up now and then to verify them. The father, with spectacles on the end of his nose and head in air, was wandering vaguely about, consulting the card he carried in his hand, and dropping his head to gaze at the pictures in a sort of helpless way over the rims of his spectacles. Suddenly he marches up to the valet, brings out of his pocket a long silver ear-trumpet which opens and shuts like a portable folding tumbler, springs it into the face of the valet with a clash, and, pointing to a particular picture, shouts interrogatively, and in that peculiar loud, uninflected voice of the deaf, "Marrige of Can-nān?" The valet looks helpless. Again he shouts still louder, "Marrige of Can-nān?" The face of the valet illuminates, and he assents, — "Ah, yas; Marriāge de Canāān." The father, satisfied, clashes together his trumpet, waits a moment gazing vacantly round, then springing it again open, and pointing to another picture, slowly shouts, "Well, sir, what is that intended to ree-present?" The valet promptly responds, "Tintoret — Mirāccle San Marc;" then pauses a moment, fixing his eyes straight on the father's dubious face, and adds, "Masterpiece." The girls continue to write; but the father has caught the idea and interrupts them with, "Girls, come here, and see St. Mark's masterpiece." They rise and accompany him. The valet places their chairs before the picture. Then he begins to explain slowly, while the girls write. The father fixes his

eye on him, his trumpet listening eagerly just before the valet's mouth. "Miraccles San Mark — Tintoret." "Who is he?" pipes one of the girls, in a high, thin, whining voice. "Miraccles San Mark," he repeats. They write it down. "See man there — slave — rope he break — Turk want kill him — can't kill him — San Mark in air. That Tintoret portrait by Tintoret." All are completely satisfied, — all except the father, who ruminates a moment, and then says, — apparently taking the view that the gallery is a "magasin d'antiquités et objets d'art," like Guggenheims, — "I wonder what they 'd take for that picture!" The valet tells him they don't sell pictures there, and the girls note the fact in their book.

B. Is this a fact, or an invention of yours?

M. It is a fact.

B. Were the girls pretty?

M. Of course they were. They were Americans, — "c'était monsieur le père qui n'était pas si bien."

B. They evidently did not take the same view of a *valet de place* as you and I do. Much as I detest this creature, he is nevertheless at times a necessity, as measles or mumps are; and, after all, he is doing his best, and it is his business, — "E un mestiere come un altro." But a connoisseur is a far worse bore; he has no reason to exist, any more than a fly, and I never could see any reason in flies. A valet, at all events, does not offend you with cant and pretension. He explains, as

well as he can, but he does not criticise. He does not feel superior to the artist, and look down upon him and patronize him, or fall into affected raptures over him.

M. Yes, there is no cant so painful as the cant of connoisseurship, with its technical terms which mean nothing, its criticism which is all by rote, and its admiration which is perfectly loveless and factitious. I detest the very words "amateur" and "connoisseur." An amateur I define to be a person who loves nothing, and a connoisseur a person who knows nothing. If either knew or loved, he would be an artist. They, at best, know only the anatomy and the dry bones of art. They use technicalities and cant phrases which they don't understand, and fall into false enthusiasms, that make you hate even what is good; and they always pretend to know and affect to feel without either knowledge or feeling.

B. There is one thing worse than an amateur or a connoisseur: it is an amatōōr or a connysōōr, and you may always know them by their constant use of the term "handling." They always go by names, and not realities. They admire by rule, and they misemploy all the slang words of art. When they look at a picture they generally think it shows critical faculty to examine it closely, bit by bit, at about an inch distance from the canvas. But the highest touch of pretended connoisseurship skill is to apply a lens to it. This has an alarming air of knowledge.

M. I don't know that bad criticism is worse than foolish enthusiasm.

B. I do not agree. There is something better in any kind of enthusiasm than in pretentious criticism. Critics generally think it shows knowledge and ability to find fault; but they are mistaken in this. It shows much more real knowledge to be able to praise justly. Nothing that ever was made, or ever will be made, is without faults. Perfection in art is impossible, and it is safest always to find fault, since defects will always necessarily exist. Besides, one can always retreat after any severe criticism into the fastness of, "I do not like it;" and this negative position is unassailable, and exposes no one to laughter or contempt. But praise is positive. It requires knowledge, and appreciation, and feeling, to praise properly. If the praise is foolishly and ignorantly bestowed, it exposes the writer or speaker to ridicule. There was never anything written, painted, or chiseled which is not full of defects. The great question is whether, in spite of those defects, it is good. Any fool among architects can find fault with St. Peter's; but, after all, is it not a great work? What makes it a great work? Tell me, you who know. The fool will tell me its defects. You only can tell me its merits. The petty fault-finder seeks out the blemishes in Shakespeare. The sympathetic poet thinks only of the beauty, the grandeur, the passion, and in the blaze of these all the shadows and blots are as nothing, — mere spots on the

sun. The anatomical critic will tell you that the Day and Night of Michael Angelo are impossible. So be it. But what is it that makes them so grand and imposing, despite their defects, — nay, perhaps, in measure because of their defects? If they were perfectly correct, would they be as impressive? I doubt it. To say of anything wherein it is right, is far more difficult than to say wherein it is wrong. Nothing is so easy as to abuse. Any ignoramus can do that. But every man has a right to be judged by his best, not by his worst; and according to what he intends to do, not according to what the critic thinks he ought to have striven to do.

M. I am afraid we have little criticism in our country in the just sense of that word; one either receives praise or blame with exaggeration. There is no justice rendered. Criticism is ruled by personal feelings, and makes itself the mouthpiece of a clique. A work is either cried up to the skies or trampled under foot, — according to the clique. Criticism has a better tone in France or Germany. It is more calm and dispassionate. The critic strives to understand the author and do him justice, rather than to instruct him or degrade him. With us, on the contrary, much of the criticism is after this fashion: The painter or author has given us a horse; he ought to have given us a bull. It is absurd that he should have omitted to put horns on his head, for the merest schoolboy knows that a bull has horns. That is, the critic will not criticise the work according to the author's intention

and motive in doing it, but instructs him that he ought to have done something different, and then finds fault with him for not doing what would have been at variance with the whole intention and motive of his work.

B. Let us leave the critics. Disraeli hit them hard when he said, critics are those who have failed in art and literature. But don't let us be too hard upon them. Artists and authors are difficult creatures to deal with. They are so sensitive that they will not allow a word of fault-finding, and they are as jealous of the slightest dispraise of their own work as of overpraise of another's. *Non ragionam di lor.*

M. Very true, and very natural, too. Every mother likes her own child, however deformed it may be; and the more crying the deformity, the stronger the bias of her love to make up for it. I hope I shall never take the low view of my own works that critics would counsel. It would kill all the heart out of me; and besides, I don't wish to be treated according to my deserts. Heaven forbid!

B. Blessed, I say, are those who are vain, — cased doubly, trebly in mail of vanity. What though the world laughs at them, they rejoice in themselves.

M. And another beatitude is, Blessed are they who expect little, for they may get what they expect.

B. I don't know about that. The vain are hap-

pier than the humble, and the world is very apt to take a man at his own reckoning. A man should stand up for himself and for his work, and not be fouling his own nest. I dare say you know a great many weak places in that work of yours which you never will point out.

M. Certainly I shall not. I should only spoil your pleasure and my own aim. Nor can I conceive that any advantage would accrue to anybody for so doing. Criticism on a work in progress, even when good, often disturbs the mind, thwarts the enthusiasm, and sets the perceptions awry. Nothing can be well done which is done with a conscious fear of criticism. And after the work is done, criticism will not help us. Let us only be in earnest and do our best, boldly. What is good cannot be crushed, what has life in it cannot be killed. Even the great lexicographer himself with his elephantine foot could not utterly trample out Shakespeare, either by his blame, his praise, or his patronage. Wordsworth survived Jeffrey's "This will never do." Let us keep calm whatever shots are fired. It will all be the same a hundred years hence. But what were we talking about when we were led off our track by the critics? How conversation "strays from the direct"!

B. That is its very charm. It is like a stroll anywhere out of the beaten path and highway, just as caprice shows the way and tempts us on.

M. Except that one is not obliged to come back — in conversation.

B. But are we not wishing to come back on the path we lost?

M. True; and what was it I was meaning to say? No matter. Ah! what you were saying, of retreating from critical dispraise into the fastness of *non mi piace*, reminded me of a French maid we once had who had as easy a facility of lying as any person I ever knew, and who justified this habit most ingeniously. She was relating a conversation with some person who had been making pushing inquiries as to a matter that she thought better not to reveal. We asked, Did you tell the truth? "Moi?" she cried with a pretty start of surprise; "je n'étais pas si bête — j'ai menti — on peut toujours vous savez se retirer sur le vrai — s'il le faut absolument." If one tell a lie at first, one can, according to her philosophy, always fall back upon the truth, if it be absolutely necessary, and be unassailable. But if one begin with the truth, one cannot fall back upon a lie with safety.

B. I must say that was ingenious.

M. She was a good creature, and honest, too; only she did not like the truth. It was hard and ugly to her — coarse, rude — and had none of the grace which could be given to a lie. Her imagination constantly outran the facts, and moulded and trained them to her will. The Roman Catholic countries seem to us peculiar in this respect. They find nothing repulsive merely in a lie, unless it be told with a wicked intent. If a lie will make you

happy, they will tell it: "e perchè non," say the Italians. "Cosa ho fatto Io di male," said one of my servants to me after I had discovered him in a deliberate lie. "But you knew I should find it out in a couple of hours," I said. "Si, Signore," he answered, "è vero; but if I had told you the truth then, you would have been annoyed and vexed two hours sooner. I saved you two hours of annoyance, and I don't see what I have done that was wrong, — Cos' ho fatto di male Io?" What could I say?

B. I suppose he thought himself quite justifiable. We of all nations are, I believe, the only one who worship Truth. But we also reverence Humbug, and make a fetish of Propriety, and are in mortal fear of Mrs. Grundy. In England can any more cruel stones be hurled at the female head than these? — "It 's not proper," and "What will people say?" Does not this make one shudder to think of it?

M. Fashion rules everything. An Egyptian shows her body and hides her face. A European hides her body and shows her face. And each would think the other immodest. An inch more or less in a ball-dress makes all the difference in the world. But Fashion is so arbitrary and so imperious that all blindly follow. Art is the fashion now. I wish I could think that there was a real love for it.

B. We have not a natural artistic sense, as the ancient Greeks had, or even as the Italians have.

Nature is undressed always before us, and therefore there is more real feeling and knowledge about landscape than about the human figure, and a better understanding of pictures than of statues. The Greeks always had the nude before them, and felt no sham modesty in exposing their person. In the annual festival of Neptune, the most beautiful girls in Athens went nude along the shore and bathed in the sea while all the assembled world looked on. There was no idea of immodesty in this. It was a religious rite. On these occasions Phryne, in the perfection of her beauty, showed herself to the admiring eyes of all, looking like Aphrodite as she rose from the sea. Artists were thus inspired, and all the world educated to a knowledge of the human figure and its nude beauty. When they saw a statue, they could criticise it and feel its beauty or defects. Even in the streets and houses, and in the walks of daily life, there was but slight concealment of the person. The Greek dresses, with their long folds and delicate draperies, followed the form and the motions. But how can we in general know whether a statue is right or wrong, who can only judge it by generalities, and lose all the finesse and refinement of the art? In Greece, fashion did not every year rearrange itself, seeking ever the new and the fantastic, as it does with us. There, beauty and grace were the ends sought, not mere novelty. For centuries the dresses never changed. They were simple, and modeled on the human figure, — *vestes artus exprimentes*, — not, like ours,

grotesque and deforming. The tyranny of scissors had not come. With them, what was beautiful to-day was beautiful to-morrow, the next month, the next year, the next century. We, on the contrary, worship the Proteus of Fashion. The costume of one season becomes ridiculous in our eyes the next season. We *chiffonner* everything. We are made up of shreds and patches. There is neither dignity nor beauty in our dress, and the outward shows of life are vulgar and ugly.

M. The worst of it is, that our taste thus becomes corrupted, and our sensibility to beauty impaired. Art is driven into a corner, and, scorning the present, is forced to take refuge in the past. It finds no nourishment in the life of to-day, and becomes artificial and pedantic. We ask for statues of our great men, but the dress we wear is so hideous and uncouth that it destroys all personal dignity, and the sculptor throws up his work in despair. How can a man look otherwise than vulgar and ridiculous mounted on a pedestal arrayed in modern dress, with two trousered legs like those of an elephant, and a mean inform coat with collar and buttons, and short board-like skirts? No careful modeling can correct these, or make them beautiful. Phidias, Praxiteles, or Lysippus alike would fail to do this. The highest genius cannot produce beauty and dignity out of what is ugly and uncouth.

B. This is what we owe to France. The dress-coat is the great product of the French Revolution,

and it is curious how it came about. The old coat out of which it was created was not beautiful in itself, but it had a certain character and effect as costume. It was long in the skirts, and buttoned across the chest. The sleeves were loose, and turned up with facings from beneath; while in full dress, lace ruffles depended over the hand. Also the coat was faced with a different-colored lining, which it showed when unbuttoned. In walking, the skirts, faced also, were turned back and buttoned up to two buttons on the back. Gradually it was lopped and reduced to the thing it now is. The skirts in front were cut away instead of being turned back, but the two foolish buttons behind were still kept after their use had gone. The front was permanently turned back, and the coat made too narrow to button, the foolish cuts now remaining in the collar representing the old division of the front lappets. As time went on, more and more of the skirts were cut away, until they were reduced to the ridiculous swallow-tail in which Beau Brummel said there was safety. The collar was then piled up behind, the facings and color were done away with, and thus little by little grew up the glorious thing called a dress-coat.

M. Is it not strange that of all fashions in late days this clings closest to Europe? Is it out of perversity, because it is the ugliest?

B. Who can tell! Fashion herself bows down before it; other things change, but this seems to be permanent.

M. Why does all the world accept France as the arbiter of taste in dress? It is a mystery I cannot explain. Has she ever invented anything beautiful in costume, except, of course, the dress-coat? I cannot find that she has. The notion of every dressmaker there is to cut out arbitrary shapes upon which are bepatched all sorts of bows, and scraps, and flounces, and ruffles of various colors, sizes, and materials, and to stick out the skirts by under-constructions so as to represent deformities. No French dress is ever made in conformity with the lines of the human figure; one thing especially I observe, the permanence of some hump of deformity on women's dresses: sometimes it is low down, sometimes high up, sometimes behind, sometimes in front, sometimes all round, but it never is wanting I suppose no modern dress would be accepted in Paris without a deformity somewhere.

B. It is the same with their architecture and their sculpture. They have no idea of simplicity and repose, but they seek to obtain beauty by excess and exaggeration. In their architecture there are no large, open, simple spaces. Every inch is bepatched with some ornament or other, until the effect is tantalizing and oppressive. Their buildings are, in a word, *chiffonnés* all over, just as their dresses are. The crowning horror of all is that embodiment of pretentious ugliness and deformity, the new Opera House. So in their sculpture there is the same absence of simplicity and

dignity. Every figure is contorted; the action is almost always excessive or affected; and their nude figures are conscious of their nudity.

M. Their costumes were originally taken from Italy — and spoiled in the taking. In the time of Shakespeare the Italians were the dressmakers, as is plain from the very terms we still use in English. A milliner is a person from Milan; a mantua-maker comes from Mantua. The gentlemen of England took their dresses from Italy: then, no one ever dreamed of going to France for dresses. Richard II.'s ear was stopped by —

> "Reports of fashions in proud Italy,
> Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
> Limps after in base imitation."

And one might go on with the quotation,

> "Where doth the world thrust forth a vanity
> (So it be new, there 's no respect how vile)
> That is not quickly buzzed into his ears."

B. One must say with Borachio, "What a deformed thief this Fashion is! How giddily he turns about all the hot-bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty" —

M. Ah, yes: "I know that deformed," as well as the First Watch: "'a has been a vile thief this seven year; 'a goes up and down like a gentleman."

B. Formerly, the fashions were quite as much for men as for women. But now we are degraded and stripped of all our gay plumage. The male birds have all bright feathers, and the female the

sober-tinted; but women in our age have robbed men of every color. But to go back to the French. In painting we must admit they are clever, — their school of design as well as of color is high. They draw admirably, and their methods of painting are vigorous and sure, — far better in every way than ours. But their excellences are chiefly material, and their school is going to seed, and devoting all its energies to *genre* pictures of cabinet size. We have no grand, imaginative works. I do not mean by this, grand pretentious canvases; a picture may be greatly imaginative in a small space, — as, for instance, the Entombment, in the Louvre, by Titian; the Vision of Ezekiel by Raffaelle; the Jacob's Dream by Rembrandt. What I mean is, that the subjects are mean and trivial in motive, and for the most part essentially naturalistic and imitative, instead of being poetic and imaginative. Stuffs admirably painted, interiors with caskets, and ormolu, and clocks, and tapestries finished with great truth to nature, and meaning nothing when they are done. *Chic* is the word for everything. The everlasting pensive woman, in a splendidly painted silk or satin, in a splendid boudoir with splendid mirrors reflecting her or her dress, meets us everywhere on these canvases, — the whole interest being in the perfection with which the accessories are painted. If the material be well represented, if the picture be clever in touch and small, it will bring a large price. But when they attempt any high imaginative work, they

are weak, artificial, and exaggerated. We in England like the namby-pamby, — we are domestically sentimental: the Mother's Darling, the Morning Prayer, Peek-a-boo, the First Step, the Last Step, the Drunkard's Home, Good-By, — these are the subjects that touch us. In landscape we strive for nature, and the literal reproduction of nature is the end of our striving. Some time or other I should like to tell you what I think real art is; for I believe in England now we are as wrong one way in our principles and practice as we used to be wrong in the other. We can neither attain the ends of art by simple imitation of nature, nor by vague generalizations. But I will spare you now. Artists, however, are not entirely to blame for this. The public demands *genre*, is wonder-struck at cleverness and *chic*, — and the public must be satisfied, —

"For those who live to please, must please to live."

It does not care for high works of imagination and mature power — and leaves them in the artist's hands. Raffaelle would starve in Paris at the present day. Teniers could give him long odds and beat him with the public. Great prices are great temptations, — irresistible temptations when the artist to whom they are offered is poor.

M. Well, the temptations are not wanting. What prices the pictures of the first artists bring now! Is it possible that another generation will rank them as highly as we do? What would Ti-

tian have thought of such prices as Meissonnier commands? What would Correggio?

B. Poor Correggio! When I think of him carrying his load of copper back in compensation of one of his finest works, it makes me grieve; if that very picture were now exposed for sale in Paris or London, hundreds of persons would be glad not only to make every copper gold, but to double the amount and count it a cheap bargain.

M. There is no truth in that story about Correggio. It is only a *ben trovato*. But no matter; the experiment has failed, as our professor in chemistry used to say, but the principle remains the same. The prices that all the great artists of that time received for their works seem to us ridiculously small, — and they were exceedingly small. Some of them, after a long life of severe labor, left no more than a mere pittance — a few hundred crowns. No common decorator of to-day would accept the wages which Michel Angelo was content to receive for his stupendous works. For instance, for his magnificent and colossal monument, as it was originally projected, to Julius II., he was only to receive 10,000 golden florins; and by the second contract he agreed to make it, with six colossal statues, — of which the Moses was one, — for 16,000 ducats. For the whole Sistine ceiling he only was to receive 15,000 ducats, and did actually receive only 3,000. For his work on the Medici Chapel of Florence he was allowed a gold florin a day. For the great figures of the Medici

Chapel in Florence he received 400 gold ducats, and was paid at the rate of a gold florin a day; but it is not said whether in this sum was included the price of the marble, which cost 150 ducats in gold. In 1501, Cardinal Francesco Piccolomino made a contract with Michel Angelo for a series of fifteen statues for the Capella Piccolomino in the Duomo at Siena. Each of these was to be two braccíi high, or nearly 4½ feet, with the exception of two figures, one of which represented Christ, and this was to be a palm, or about nine inches higher; the other, four fingers higher. Added to these, there were also to be four angels. And for all these figures the sculptor was to receive 500 gold ducats, to be paid by instalments as he finished each figure. He only modeled four of these, — St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Pius, and St. Gregorius. Now, I ask you, is there any artist of to-day, of any class, who would accept such a commission?

B. None, of course.

M. Oh, I forgot to mention the colossal David. For this he was to receive by contract six golden florins a month, and to finish it in two years, — that is, 144 florins for the completed work. For the Last Judgment, however, he was better paid, and received for it 1,200 scudi d'oro a year for life. This was better than the Carracci fared, who, for the whole of the magnificent frescoes which adorn the ceiling of the Farnese Palace at Rome, was paid only 500 scudi; or than poor Correggio, who

only received 1,100 gold ducats for the whole Cupola of San Giovanni at Parma, as well as the Chapel and the Choir.

B. But even this is a fortune compared to some of the prices paid to the great artists at that time. Domenichino, for instance, was paid about fifty scudi for his great picture of St. Jerome; and for the magnificent Marriage at Cana, now in the Louvre, Paolo Veronese only received a sum equivalent to about £40. Indeed, I have been told that there is still in the archives of Paris a letter from him relating to this picture, in which he makes a charge for the eggs bought by him to lay in the ground in tempera, as well as for the ultramarine he used. This is curious, besides the evidence it affords as to the exceedingly small compensation he received, as showing that he first painted this picture in tempera, and then went over it in oil.

M. It seems almost impossible that he should have received such a price for that noble work. Raffaelle was better paid; but the sums he received were certainly not large. What would he have thought, could one gifted with prophecy have told him the prices that his pictures now command? There is, for instance, his great altar-piece, — stored, I believe, in one of the lower rooms of the British Museum, — for which £40,000 is now asked. What would he have thought of that?

B. I suppose he would have thought 40,000 pence a fair price then. But, after all, large as the price seems, is it too large? The picture is

very fine; and if a large Raffaelle for a gallery be wanted, where can another be found? It is not like buying a picture by Millais, or Meissonnier, or Fortuny. If you don't like one, you can get another. You cannot go to Raffaelle, and give him a commission; nor can you find similar pictures by him for sale in other places. The price is one of affection. Such works have no market price. If you give £7,000 for a small Meissonnier, is £40,000 too much for a great Raffaelle? It depends upon how much you want it, and whether you can afford such a luxury.

M. The old Greeks or Romans would not have hesitated for a moment. They are the only persons who ever really valued art: a distinguished artist was sure with them to be a millionaire.

B. You surprise me. Did they pay such large prices for works of art?

M. Large as we think the prices we now pay, they are simply shabby and mean when compared with what the old Greeks paid to their great artists. The prices paid in Italy, at its prime of art, bore about the same relation to ours, at the present day, that ours bear to those of Greece and Rome.

B. It seems to me impossible. Give me some instances if you can.

M. Wait a moment. I have a little list of some of them, which, from time to time, I have noted down in my reading, and I will find it, and read it to you. It was a noble thing to be an artist in those days. One did not dine in the ser-

vants' hall. The celebrated artists were not only tremendous swells, but millionaires, — or might be if they chose. All the world coveted them, and flattered them, and their works were counted the glory of the state. There was Zeuxis, for instance, who used to parade about Olympia with his name embroidered in gold on his robes, and who amassed such a gigantic fortune from the sale of his pictures that finally he would not sell any more, but gave them away, saying there was no price high enough to pay for them. He was fooled to the top of his bent everywhere. He was the admired of all admirers, — courted by all his countrymen, high or low, and famous abroad. He did not ask favors, but conferred them, and in a princely way presented his work to cities, and states, and friends. For instance, to Archilaus he gave his Pan; and to the inhabitants of Agrigentum his Alcmena, as a great favor.

B. According to your account he must have been both vain and ostentatious; but one can scarcely wonder, when such court was paid him, and such fortune waited on him.

M. In point of mere pride and luxury Parrhasius exceeded him. "He was," says Pliny, "the most insolent and arrogant of artists." He painted a portrait of himself, and dedicated it in a public temple to Mercury. But Apollodorus, perhaps, surpassed him. He used to walk about Athens with a lofty tiara on his head, after the Persian fashion, "the admired of all admirers."

Nicias was equally proud, vain, wealthy, and generous, and he refused to sell his picture of the Νεκυία (Summoning of Spirits) to King Attalus, who offered him 60 talents, and rather chose to present it to his country as a gift.

B. How much would 60 talents be exactly?

M. That depends on whether they are Attic or Æginetan talents. An Attic or Euboic talent was about £293 15*s.*, and an Æginetan talent about £393 15*s.* Taking the lesser Attic talent at round numbers at £250, 60 talents would be £15,000.

B. Fifteen thousand pounds is a "good round sum," as Shylock has it. I suppose there is not a living artist that would refuse it for any picture of his. Nicias must have been a rich man to be able to refuse it.

M. He was an artist of distinction, and that meant a rich man in Greece.

B. So it would seem.

M. King Attalus seems to have had a decided taste for art, and to have paid handsomely for what he bought. For a single figure by Aristides he gave 100 talents, or about £25,000. You see that I calculate at the lowest possible rates of value of the talent. Mnason, the tyrant of Elatea, was not so good or generous a patron apparently, for he had the meanness to offer to pay the same artist for a small picture representing a battle of the Persians, on which there were one hundred figures, only at the rate of 10 minæ, or a little over £40, for each figure, — which would only make about £4,000 for the picture.

B. I suppose the picture was small and the figures overlapping and hiding each other, as in any representation of such a subject they must. So that really the price does not strike me as being small.

M. It was very small for the period, but Mnason was a sharp dealer. He gave Asclepiodorus only 300 minæ, or about £1,250 apiece, for twelve figures by him, representing the twelve gods; and Theomnestus he seems to have treated still worse, for he only offered him 100 minæ, or about £400, for any picture he would paint of a hero.

B. When wholesale orders are given like these, one cannot expect such high prices. Besides, it is plain that these were mere decorative pictures of effect, each of a single figure. We should think the prices very high for such works.

M. Julius Cæsar was a far more generous patron of painting. He bought of Timomachus, the painter of Athens, two figures, one representing Ajax and the other Medea, which he placed in the temple of Venus Genetrix, for which he paid 80 Attic talents, or £20,000. This is a handsome sum when one thinks that each picture only represented a single figure.

B. Who would have supposed the great first Cæsar was such a lover and patron of art? We never think of him in this relation, but rather as the great soldier and statesman.

M. All the emperors, or nearly all, were devoted to art. And some of them, as Hadrian and

Nero, you remember, were artists themselves. Art was a part of their education, as it was of every high-born Roman or Greek. The Fabii, "clarissimæ gentis," had the cognomen of Pictor, derived from the chief of the family who painted the Temple of Health in 450 U. C.; and this painting existed in the time of Pliny. We may also mention, among others, Cicero and Hortensius, Marcus Agrippa, Crassus, Titus Petronius, and more than all Marcus Scaurus, and Lucius, and Marcus Lucullus, who were all liberal patrons and lovers of art. The sums which were spent by the latter on works of art seem almost fabulous.

B. One better understands how the Romans, many of whom were enormously rich, could spend large sums on art; but what surprises me is to hear that the Greeks also quite equaled them in the sums they expended on paintings and statues.

M. They certainly do not seem to have fallen below them. I have found my list at last, — and this will prompt my memory, — and I will pick out some of the items for you. Apelles, I find, received 20 talents in gold, or from £5,000 to £6,000, for a portrait of Alexander wielding a thunderbolt, which he painted on the walls of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. He was a high-minded, generous man, and his conduct towards Protogenes, a fellow-painter of Rhodes, always particularly pleased me, as showing a spirit above envy and jealousy. The Rhodians at first made very little account of Protogenes, as is so often the

case when we are dealing with men who grow up familiarly among us. A painter as well as a prophet has often little honor in his own country until he is valued abroad. Protogenes was a striking example of this. In the early part of his career his patrons were few, and he was forced to set a small price on his works. But Apelles when on a visit to Rhodes went to see him, and was so struck by his pictures that he at once offered him 50 talents apiece, or from £12,500 to £15,000, for those he had in his studio. Protogenes gladly accepted it; and as soon as the report spread that the great painter had given this price, the Rhodians besieged him to purchase them back from him. But Apelles rebuked them for their treatment of Protogenes, and refused to surrender them except at an advanced price, saying they were worth far more than he had been able to give. From that time forward the fortune of Protogenes was made.

B. That was a noble act, which deserves to be remembered, and told when the jealousies of artists are commented on. It gives one a notion of the wealth of the great artists, too. There are very few of us now who could afford to do so generous an act, however we might desire to do it. What a pity it is that we have nothing left of any of the great works of Apelles!

M. Ah, yes! what would one not give to see that famous picture of his of Venus Anadyomene, for which two of the most beautiful women of the age sat to him as models, — Phryne and Cam-

paspe! Phryne, Athenæus says, was the most beautiful in the nude figure, though Campaspe excelled her in beauty of face. But I should be satisfied to see either of them, or have either for a model.

B. I should rather have had them both, as he had. When one is wishing, why restrict one's self to the possible? Of course I would not now be living if I had ever seen either in the living body; but why should I not wish for the impossible? At all events, it is abominable in Fate to prevent me from seeing at least a portrait of each or both.

M. Or many another portrait that has vanished. For instance, any one by Dionysius of Colophon, who was so celebrated for the life-like character of his works that, speaking of one of them, Anacreon says: —

> "Hold! I see, — 't is she herself:
> Soon, O wax, thou 'lt surely speak!"

Wax meaning, of course, colors; for all paintings were in wax as a medium.

> Απέχει· βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν
> Τάχα, κηρὲ, καὶ λαλήσεις.

Or the portrait painted by Polygnotus of Elpinice, his mistress, and the daughter of Miltiades. True, she was thirty-five when it was painted, but still in the perfection of her beauty and grace, and he chose her as his model for the daughter of Priam, in his famous picture of "The Rape of Cassandra" in the Pœcile at Athens. Indeed, I should not

be displeased to see the portrait of Miltiades himself, which was placed in the Pœcile, and on which he was not permitted to inscribe his name.

B. Oh, Polygnotus seems to have been a magnificent old fellow, — an artist prince, who did things in the grand style. He it was, if I remember right, who painted at Athens the porch called the Pœcile, refusing to receive any remuneration therefor. And the Amphictyons or Public Council of Greece, unwilling to be outdone in generosity, made him the guest of the state, and bestowed upon him his house and maintenance at the public expense.

M. Yes; and yet they would not let him put his name on his portrait! Odd enough, is it not? But to go on. Here I find a statement which gives us an idea of the value attached to pictures by the old Greeks. Plutarch relates that Aratus, being desirous to make a present to Ptolemy, sent him some old pictures by Melanthus and Pamphilus; and in recompense for them Ptolemy sent in return 150 talents, which, if they were merely Attic talents, amounted to some £37,500.

B. Pray continue with your list.

M. I am afraid I have exhausted my list of pictures, the prices of which are stated in talents. One cannot say whether the talent of Attica or Æginetа is intended when they are spoken of; but as I have taken the lesser Attic talent, we may be sure that we have not overestimated the prices. The sums paid for the other pictures of which I

have made notes are all stated in sesterces. Unfortunately, the signs employed by the Romans to express sestertii or sestertia are exceedingly confusing, and we cannot always determine whether the sum given is to be estimated in sestertii or sestertia. The difference, however, is very great between the one and the other. The sestertius was $2\frac{1}{2}$ asses, and before the time of Augustus was of about the value of $2\frac{1}{10}$ pence, and afterwards of about $1\frac{3}{5}$ pence; while the sestertium was, previous to Augustus, of about the value of £8 17*s.*, afterwards of £7 16*s.* So far this is clear; but as the sign HS or IIS meant both sestertium and sestertius (meaning *semis et tertium*), if the number be represented by the Roman letters, as H.S. xxv., it may mean either, and we are quite in the dark. We can only be sure when the number is written — as H.S. trecenti, or H.S. trecenta, or H.S. decies. I should also state that, where this number is preceded by a numeral adverb ending in "ies," the number must be multiplied by 100,000. Having premised this, I only give you a few more citations from my list. I have already alluded to M. Agrippa as a patron of art. He it was, you remember, who built and bequeathed to his countrymen the magnificent Thermæ in the Campus Martius, with their splendid gardens, libraries, and porticoes, — one portion of which, the Pantheon, "pride of Rome," as Byron calls it, still remains. Though a man of enormous wealth, as well as of great distinction, not only for his public services

in war, but also from being allied to the imperial family by his marriage with Julia, the daughter of Augustus (and a precious life she led him, too), he was simple and severe in his tastes and in his habits. Still, as you see, he had both the power and the will to make munificent gifts to the people beyond anything known at the present day. And not content with this, he wrote an oration, urging upon those who possessed statues, pictures, or works of art of any kind, the duty of exhibiting them to the public. What is to our purpose at present, however, is the fact recorded by Pliny, that he paid to the people of Cyzicus for two paintings, one representing Ajax and one Venus, the small sum of 1,200,000 sesterces, which, reckoned at their lowest value, amounted to over £10,600.

B. These could have been only single figures apparently, — ideal portraits. By whom were they painted?

M. Pliny does not inform us. Had they been by one of the most celebrated artists, he would probably have given his name. But this is mere conjecture.

B. Well, go on.

M. What gives more probability to the conjecture that these pictures were not by any very eminent artist, is the value attached to one picture by Aristides. This picture, representing Father Bacchus, was brought from Greece by Lucius Mummius, among the spoils of victory, and he made a contract for the sale of it with Attalus, king of

Pergamus, for the bagatelle of 6,000 sestertia, — "vi. mil sestertium;" but he afterwards, to the great regret of Attalus, revoked the sale, on the ground that the price was too small.

B. Six thousand sestertia! That would be about £52,500 of our money.

M. Yes. There is no mistake here, unless Pliny made it, for the words are written "vi. mil sestertium."

B. That is, £12,500 more than is asked for the altar-piece by Raffaelle, of which we were speaking, without taking into consideration the decrease in the value of money since the days of the Roman Empire; but taking it at an equal valuation, it seems almost incredible. By the way, is it not of this Mummius that the story is told, that when he was embarking some of these magnificent works of which he robbed Greece, he obliged the captain of the vessel to sign an obligation that in case any of them were lost or destroyed he would replace them with others?

M. The same. Poor man! he knew more about war than art, and probably supposed one picture or statue was as good as another, provided it was of the same size. But art had its revenge upon him; not all his victories could relieve him from the ridicule he brought upon himself by this absurd contract. There was a roar of inextinguishable laughter over all Rome when it became known.

B. Have you any other instance of so large a price being given for a single work of art?

M. Not for a picture, — though larger prices were given for statues, as you will see. Strabo, however, tells us that when a great tribute was imposed upon the inhabitants of Cos, an offer was made to them to abate from it the sum of 100 talents for the picture of Venus Anadyomene by Apelles; but whether this offer was accepted or not, he does not state.

B. Were these Attic or Æginetan talents?

M. Probably Attic, — which would make this sum about £25,000; if they were Æginetan, they would be nearly £35,000. But it is safer to consider them as Attic. I have but few other notes of pictures, and not of much consequence. We have seen that King Attalus lost one picture of Aristides, on which he had set his heart, among the spoils of Lucius Mummius; but he did get possession of another by this artist representing a sick man lying on his bed, for which he paid 100 talents. Candaules, too, the last Lydian king of the race of the Heraclidæ, bought of the painter Bularchus his picture representing the battle fought by Candaules with the Magnetes, for which he paid him its weight in gold. This is wholly indefinite, as we do not know its weight; but it must have been considerable, as paintings were then made on heavy wooden panels.

B. It would seem, at least, that even at this early period art was valued. This was, if I remember right, about the end of the eighth century before Christ, — some four centuries before gold

began to be coined at Athens. But, as we know from Herodotus, the Lydians had long before coined gold, and were, according to him, the first who did. What a story it is that Herodotus tells of Candaules and Gyges!

M. Candaules must have been an egregious ass, or he would have known better than to have exposed the charms of his wife to his rival; but he had to pay for his folly with his life, and so the account was squared.

B. Possibly this very picture by Bularchus was hanging in the chamber of the queen when Gyges looked in from the closet where Candaules hid him to prove his wife the most beautiful of women.

M. Very possible. What a charm there is in the Father of History! what simple directness and picturesqueness! I don't know that dignity has added much to history. The further it removes itself from annals, the statelier and stupider it becomes.

B. Apropos of the very subject we are discussing, let me recall to you the tradition that Herodotus, when an old man, read his History to an Athenian audience at the Panathenaic festival, and so enchanted them that they gave him ten talents, or £2,500, as a recompense. That was better than lecturing even in America. I doubt whether even Bancroft, Motley, or Prescott would ever have made as much by reading their histories, admirable as they are, in the Athens of America.

M. Isocrates, it is said, received a sum equivalent to about £3,875 for one oration; and Virgil, for his famous lines on Marcellus, was rewarded by a gift of about £1,700; and, according to Suetonius, Tiberius presented to Asellius Sabinus 400,000 sesterces (about £3,540) for a dialogue he wrote between a mushroom, a cabbage, an oyster, and a thrush, in which they disputed among themselves. But to go back to our pictures. I have only two more on my list. They are of little consequence, but here they are. Hortensius the orator — whom Cicero admired, whom Roscius imitated, and whose memory was so remarkable that he is said to have been able, in coming out of a sale-room, to repeat backward the auction-list — was also a lover of pictures; and for a painting of the Argonautæ by Cydias, he paid 144,000 sestertii or sestertia, as you choose, for which he constructed a shrine at Tusculum, and, I have no doubt, discussed its merits there with Cicero.

B. It is pleasant to think of those great men of the past walking through their libraries and porticoes, and talking of art and literature and politics, and descanting upon each other's statues and pictures; and I am glad to know even one picture in the house of Hortensius. It makes him more real to me. I wish I knew what others he had.

M. Many, I doubt not, and very valuable ones, for he was a man of great wealth as well as great taste and culture. Among other works of art he had a sphinx of Corinthian brass, which he ob-

tained from Verres, and referring to which Cicero made a statement which Pliny has thought worthy of repeating. Hortensius, in arguing with him, said warmly, "I do not understand enigmas." "But you should," returned Cicero, "for you keep a sphinx at home." This was what the Romans, perhaps, considered witty. I have only one more picture to speak of, and then we will turn to the statues, and this was a picture of Archigallus, painted by Parrhasius, and estimated at 60,000 sestertia, which the emperor Tiberius owned, and kept constantly in his bed-chamber. And now that I speak of it, there was still one other picture, by Parrhasius, which was offered by testament of the Roman knight to whom it belonged to the emperor Tiberius, — he having the option to receive it, or take in its place a million sesterces. The subject was an abominable one, but Tiberius chose the picture, and kept it in his bed-chamber. If you are anxious as to the subject, you will find it described in the pages of Suetonius, in his life of the emperor.

B. I know what the tastes of Tiberius were, and I can imagine the subject. But let us now have the statues.

M. Very well; I will begin with the colossal statues. The famous Colossus at Rhodes, which was made of bronze and was 70 cubits (or about 105 feet) in height, was twelve years in making, is said to have cost only 300 talents, or about £75,000 if we reckon the Attic talent, or £102,000

if we reckon the other talent, and probably the latter talent is to be reckoned in this case. At all events, the so-called Colossus of the Sun, in the Capitol, which was a bronze figure of Apollo, only thirty cubits — or forty-five feet English — high, brought by Marcus Lucullus from Apollonia, in Pontus, cost 500 talents, which, if reckoned even as Attic talents, would be over £125,000; and it would hardly be probable that the Colossus at Rhodes, which was twice its height, could have been executed for so much less. But this is a trifle compared to the price paid for a colossal statue of Mercury, made for the city of the Averni in Gaul, by Zenodorus. On this work he was engaged for ten years, and the cost of it was £335,000.

B. What did the gold and ivory Athena of Phidias in the Parthenon, or his Zeus at Olympia, cost? These will give us some rule to reckon by, perhaps.

M. I am not aware that the whole cost of these statues is stated by any ancient author. The gold employed on the movable drapery alone of the Athena was over forty talents in weight of unalloyed gold, according to Thucydides, whose exactness in such matters is above suspicion. This would be equivalent to some £116,000 in coin; while a single lock on the head of the Zeus at Olympia weighed six minæ, or about the value of nearly £5,000. For the famous statue of the Diadumenos, which was a bronze figure of life-size,

representing a youth tying a fillet round his head, Polycleitus received 100 talents, or about £25,000.

B. This was called the Canon, was it not, from its extreme perfection and proportion?

M. No; it was another figure by Polycleitus, called the Doryphoros, or spear-bearer, to which that epithet was given, — not because it was a canon in itself, but because it embodied practically the canon or rule of proportion established by Polycleitus, and set forth in a treatise he wrote on Proportion, which unfortunately is lost.

B. Have we no record of it?

M. Vitruvius gives us empirically some of the measurements, but even in these he is in some cases manifestly incorrect. Of the principles of proportion upon which the system of Polycleitus was founded he apparently was ignorant; and as probably the book as well as the statue had disappeared before his day, his system only remained as a tradition. I think that there is little doubt that this system was founded upon certain mathematical relations of numbers, as well as upon a geometrical basis, of which the numbers three, four, eight, and twelve, as well as the triangle, square, and circle, made an essential part. But this is too intricate, and would require too much time to explain here, even supposing you were interested in the matter. We should rather keep to our subject. If I should begin to talk about proportions, you would soon wish I were in Jericho.

B. Well, for the present, let us go on with the statues.

M. You remember the fourth oration that Cicero fulminated against Verres?

B. I remember the oration; but, if I am not mistaken, it was never delivered. It was only prepared for delivery. One passage always particularly amused me, as showing the deliberate artifice with which Cicero prepared his public orations, so as to give them an off-hand air of improvisation. He is speaking of a certain work of a distinguished artist as well known to him as Scipio; but he pretends to forget his name, and appeals to his audience to prompt him; after a moment's hesitation he recalls it, as if it had suddenly come to his memory. I forget the exact words, and I have not his oration, but you will find it there. It is something like this: "Erant ænea duo preterea signa. Canephoræ ipsæ vocabantur; sed earum artificem — quem? Quemnam? Recte admones — Polycletum esse dicebant."

M. The old humbug! I suppose there never was a more artificial writer. Even his letters are compositions prepared evidently for the public eye, — stiff, formal, self-conscious, and a little pedantic. How different, for example, from those of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius! It seems to me that these are the most natural of all the ancient letters that have come down to us. Some of them have pretty little phases of common life, and turns of expression that are charming, and particularly here or there where the children are spoken of with diminutives of affection, and their doings are recounted.

For instance, where Fronto says. "Vidi pullulos tuos, quod quidem libertissime in vita mea viderim. cum simili facie tibi ut nihil sit hoc simili, similius. . . . Panem alter tenebat bene candidum, ut puer regius; alter autem cibarium, plane ut patre philosopho prognatus. Deos quaeso sit salvus sator, salva sint sata, salva seges sit, quæ tam similes procreat. Nam etiam voculas quoque eorum audivi tam dulcis, tam venustas, ut orationis tuæ lepidum illum et liquidum sonum nescio quo pacto in utriusque pipulo agnoscerem."

B. Charming! and to think that these little chicks (*pulluli*) were Commodus and Antoninus! But perhaps little Antoninus, who died when four years old, might really have grown up like his father. But do you remember that remarkable letter of Fronto on the death of his nephew — *De nepote amisso* — so full of that deep intensity of feeling which we are accustomed to think averse from all the old Roman habits of thought? He is overwhelmed with grief, and expresses it with great vehemence and passion. I commend it to you if you do not know it.

M. It is idle to think they did not suffer just as we do from the loss of friends, however they might deem it fit to assume a stoical air of indifference. I do not believe they did assume this air — in private life. But to "resume" — as Byron has it — or we shall never get through our list. The Cupid originally made for the people of Parium by Praxiteles, afterwards came into the possession

of Heius, a rich Sicilian, who was forced to yield it to Verres for the ridiculously small price of H.S. M.D.C. Cicero founds on this fact the argument that such a price could only have been the result of violence on the part of Verres, and fear on the part of Heius, and says: "Have we not seen a small bronze statue sold at auction for 120,000 sesterces (H.S. C.XX millibus)? and if I desired to mention those who have paid an equal and even a larger price than this, could I not do so?" How, then, he goes on to argue, is it possible to suppose that for this contemptible price Heius would willingly, and without threats of violence in case of his refusal, have surrendered this statue to Verres for 1,600 sesterces, when a small brass statue at auction constantly brings as much as 120,000?

B. Even this was a small price apparently: 120,000 sesterces (supposing he meant the sestertius) are only about £1,063, which seems like nothing compared to the prices you have stated.

M. So it would seem; but you must remember that Cicero is speaking of a small bronze, and not of a life-size figure, and his argument is, that if a small statue like this, even at auction, would bring £1,063, — made by no great artist — it is impossible to believe that Heius would have sold a statue by Praxiteles for the price of some £13, unless he was forced by violence to do so. After all, is there any small modern bronze which would bring anything like such a price as £1,063? Yet,

as you say, even that seems a small price when we know that Lucullus contracted to give the modeler Arcesilaus, — though he died before he could finish it, — for a statue of Felicity in plaster only, the sum of 60,000 sesterces, or half that price; and Octavius, a Roman knight, gave the same artist, for a design or copy of a *cratera* (or mixing-bowl) in the same material, no less than a talent, or £250.

B. It would seem, then, that they used plaster at this period for modeling. Did they know anything about casting in plaster?

M. It is generally supposed that they did; but this opinion is founded almost solely on a passage in Pliny, which has, in my opinion, been quite misinterpreted, and means nothing of the kind. Had they known how to cast in plaster, we should have had casts and moulds. Much frailer objects have been preserved to us. But besides, had this art been possessed by them, we should certainly have had *repliche* identical in form and size of all their great works, and there is not an identical copy of a single one. As far as we know, the famous Venuses of Praxiteles were each unique, as were all the great or indeed small ancient statues. The repetitions in every case are variations.

B. The argument seems conclusive.

M. The value set upon these works of Praxiteles seems almost incredible. King Nicomedes offered the inhabitants of Cnidus that, if they would sell him their famous Venus by this artist, he would pay all their public debt, which was enor-

mous, —"quod erat ingens,"— says Pliny; but they rather chose to suffer anything than to part with this rare and exquisite work. "Nor was it without good cause," says Pliny, "that they showed themselves so resolute in their refusal, for this statue of Praxiteles ennobled Cnidus." There in her temple stood the marble divinity, and strangers flocked from every quarter of the earth to gaze at her and do her reverence. We also get an idea of the value placed on works of art from the extraordinary care which was taken for their preservation. For instance, those who had charge of the brazen dog in the Temple of Juno, which was celebrated for its admirable workmanship and fidelity to nature, were made responsible for its safety with their lives; and the same rule obtained in regard to the statues in the Septa, by unknown artists, representing Pan, Chiron, Achilles, and Olympus. If we turn from the statues — and I have now gone through with my list of them — to the other objects of luxury and art, we find the ancient Romans equally if not more extravagant. For a single dish of pottery the tragic actor Æsophus paid a hundred thousand sesterces, or nearly £900; and the emperor Vitellius ordered a dish to be made for him, for which a furnace was erected in the fields outside the city, for a million sesterces, or £9,000.

B. Nine thousand pounds for a single dish of pottery by a Roman artist! This exceeds belief.

M. It is an accredited fact, and is reported by

Pliny. Murrhine cups were a special luxury, on which they spent large sums. Murrhine was a species of opaline stone, variegated with delicate colors, somewhat apparently between an opal and feldspar, exceedingly rare, and commanding large prices. One of these cups, holding less than three pints, was sold for 70,000 sesterces, or more than £700. For another, Titus Petronius gave 300,000 sesterces, or £2,700; and Nero having set his eye on this, Petronius, who hated the emperor, dashed it to fragments in order to prevent him from getting possession of it. Nero himself, however, surpassed them all, for he had a murrhine cup for which he paid the prodigious sum of a million sesterces.

B. I suppose there were no boundaries to the extravagance of this madman. What did he not do that was wild and wicked?

M. He was perhaps a little more extravagant than the rest, but not so very much. Almost any of them would crush a province to possess a cup. You think this price he paid for this murrhine cup extravagant; what do you think of his paying £32,291 13*s.* 4*d.* for a carpet?

B. I say with Mantilini, "Dem the 4*d.*!" What a price!

M. That is a mere bagatelle. Suetonius tells us that the grave Julius Cæsar gave for a single pearl sexagies sestertium, — 600,000 sesterces, — £5,400. Alexander, according to Pliny, gave sixteen talents for his famous Bucephalus; and — open your

eyes — Tacitus informs us that Nero gave away in presents to his friends, "bis et vicies millies sestertium," which is about 19½ millions sterling.

B. You take my breath away! On the whole, I think better of Nero than I ever did before. A man or an emperor who gives away presents to that amount must at least have been generous.

M. There can be no doubt that he was generous, and, when the good fit was on him, amusing and spirited. What the patricians hated him for was, not so much his crimes or his wild extravagances as because he prided himself on being an artist, and acted on the stage, and drove in the public races, sang and danced in the theatre, fought in the arena, which they thought disgraced his own position as emperor and lowered their dignity. They little cared how much money he spent, and scarcely how many crimes he committed. There was always a ready excuse to be found for these — crime was too common to be peculiar, extravagance was universal. Even Seneca, with all his philosophy and moral sentences, more than apologized for Nero's crimes: he defended them; nay, he defended the very worst of them, the murder of his mother, if he did not even go further and abet it, as seems most probable, As for his lavishness of expenditure, that was nothing. The very man they placed on his seat, after the brief interval of Galba, was his boon companion in vice and luxury. Otho, when he came to the purple, himself owed £1,602,000. Besides, it was this very lavishness

that rendered him popular with the Roman people. He won, at all events, their affections. In fact, he had more sympathies with them than with the higher classes. It is curious that, with all his love of athletic sports, of fighting and driving, and the excitement of the arena, he was really a coward, and most of his crimes seem to have been prompted by fear of those by whom he was surrounded. He was mortally afraid of his mother, and he had every reason to be. She wished to be the head power of the state, and to use him as a puppet. With twice the ability, twice the courage, and twice the will of her son, she was always in his way. She menaced, flattered, and harassed him by turns, and at the last it would seem that fear of her drove him to compass her death. His was a strange combination of contradictory qualities, — generosity, cruelty, fear, recklessness, love of poetry, art, music, and all the æsthetic pursuits, together with a coarseness of feeling, a violence of passion, a hardness of heart, and a savage thirst for blood, which was, even at that time, amazing. No one could count on him a moment. He was as variable in his moods as a feather to the wind. Sullen and moody, gay and volatile, timorous and cruel, superstitious and defiant, by turns, he was at once a terror and a delight to his friends.

B. In a word, he was half mad. How strange it is that in all his early youth he should have been so tractable, even tender-hearted, and then suddenly should have changed to such violence and

wickedness! The first sentence of death that was put before him he shrank from signing, saying he wished he knew not how to write. He found no such difficulty in after-days. The tremendous power he wielded, the complete immunity from punishment he enjoyed, seems to have turned his head. After all, his father's sneer at his birth was justified by his life. "What," he said to Agrippina, "can be born from us but a monster?"

M. One should always remember, in considering Nero, that in history his crimes are, as it were, seen in perspective; and though really separated by considerable intervals, they there appear crowded together, and almost in one mass. Like pillars seen at a distance along a level road, they appear close to each other, though there really may be long spaces between them. Besides, they are so colossal in themselves that they become to us the main features of his life, and dwarf everything else. To those who stood abreast of them, living along with them, they did not produce this effect. There were salient points occurring now and then, but diminished in effect by the daily flatness of common occurrences, and obscured by means of smaller events. His murders were nine days' wonders, and in the intervals he occupied the minds of men with games and largesses, *panem et circenses*, and banquets, and pomp, and ceremonies, and thus drew them away from the contemplation of his gross and occasional crimes by constant and enticing interests; otherwise it would have been

impossible even for them to tolerate him. He looks to us as if his life were one mass of horrors; to them, these horrors were occasional.

B. Besides, we unconsciously judge his life by our own, and his actions by those which would be possible at the present day, without taking into account the difference of habits, and principles, and ideas. His worst crime, depend upon it, had not the same aspect to them as to us.

M. He is a very interesting study, if one only had the time to give to him. But now let us consider him only on the side of extravagance. Think of his having expended in about fourteen years, in presents only, the enormous sum of $19\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling!

B. Let me see, — if the Queen of England had given away, for the thirty-seven years of her reign, the entire sum appointed to her by the state, she would have expended only about two thirds of this sum.

M. Yes; but it is easy enough to understand how he could so encumber the state, as well as his own fortune, when one considers his habits. For instance, Suetonius tells us that, at a supper given by him, one of the dishes, which was prepared with honey, cost no less than four millions of sesterces (quadragies sestertium); and another dish, flavored with roses, cost even more.

B. I don't believe it; but no matter.

M. Oh, yes; whatever were the actual prices, there is no doubt that his suppers were sumptuous

beyond record. When Tiridates came to Rome, he entertained him more than royally, appropriating to him daily for his expenses 80,000 sesterces (œlagista nummum millia diurna), and on his departure he made him a present of a million (sestertium millies). Besides, it is easy enough to squander a fortune if one plays, as he did, at 500 sesterces the point; or if one never travels with less than a thousand carriages, or if all one's mules are shod with silver, and all one's coachmen and runners are adorned with bracelets. There was a splendid extravagance and an utter recklessness in all that he did.

B. Have you any other items of the extravagance of these Romans, or of their fortunes?

M. Yes, I have noted down a number of items showing how far behind them we are, for all we think we are extravagant in modern times. Who does not scold, for instance, at the money women lay out now upon their dresses! But what shall we say of Lollia Paullina, the rival of Agrippina, whose dresses alone were valued at £332,916?

B. Impossible! That must have included at least her jewels.

M. No, — not at all. Ah! you don't believe it? Listen, then, to what Pliny says: "I have seen Lollia [happy Pliny! — he saw her] on an occasion of no special solemnity, but at a plain citizen's bridal supper, all covered with pearls and emeralds, her hair and head-dress, ears, neck, and fingers, worth as much as forty million sesterces,"

— that is, £312,500 worth of jewels on her person at a plain citizen's supper. "Such was the style in which she came to witness the act of marriage. Nor were these love-tokens of a princely prodigal. They were the treasures of her grandsire, amassed from the spoil of provinces. Such was the end of all this rapine. Lollius suffered disgrace, and perished by his own hand, that his granddaughter might blaze by lamplight in the splendor of forty millions."

B. Well, her own end was even worse. Poor Lollia! She made a narrow miss of being empress; but Agrippina was too wily, and won the game. All her beauty, all her splendor of dress, and her luxury, and her wit, availed her little against her cruel rival. She perished miserably at last by violence and in exile. I know no more revolting story than that which is related by Dion of Agrippina, who, after she had put Lollia to death, commanded the centurion to bring her the head of her rival; and she, to make sure that the ghastly face was really that of the beautiful woman whose life she had ruined, pushed up her dead lips to verify her by her teeth.

M. Ghastly! By the way, there is one book that I should like of all others to read, — the memoirs which Agrippina is said to have written of her own life. What revelations it would make! what an insight it would give us into the interior life of Rome!

B. Did she ever write such a book?

M. So it is said; but unfortunately it is lost, and so are these last books of Tacitus, which would have given us the end of Nero. It would have made a companion to his "Tiberius."

B. What a picture he would have made of that! Not that I think his picture of Tiberius, powerful as it is, has any justification in fact. Tacitus studiously maligned Tiberius, and there would seem to be no warrant for this savage portrait. Tacitus was a partisan, and full of prejudice, and all his statements must be taken with considerable abatement. His account of the death of Nero is certainly a great loss. Still, Suetonius has given us an account so picturesque, so evidently true in all its details, of these last terrible days of Nero, that for myself I doubt if Tacitus would have made it more real to me. He would have written it better, but the detail as told by Suetonius could not be improved.

M. Nero seems truly to have loved Poppæa, and no wonder, if it were possible for him to love anybody. She must have been a great beauty, and have possessed, besides, a peculiar charm of attraction. Her manners, it is admitted, despite the licentiousness of her life, were modest and gentle, and her wit was celebrated. To her might be applied that amusing statement of our American friend, who said of some one, after praising her beauty, and grace, and wit: "My dear fellow, she has only one defect, — she has no kind of principle." Her luxury was at least equal to that of

Lollia; and when she traveled, she carried with her 500 she-asses, so that she might have her bath of milk every morning. Why not? She could afford it.

B. Do you know the so-called Clytie of the British Museum?

M. Yes; and why is it supposed to represent Clytie?

B. Because there are the leaves of the sunflower around the bust; and the myth is, that she was enamored of Apollo, and was changed into the heliotrope, or sunflower.

M. But why in this connection did you ask if I knew the bust?

B. Because I believe it is the portrait of Poppæa. It is plainly not an ideal bust, but a portrait; and even if it represent Clytie, it is a portrait of some real person in that character. It has none of the features, characteristics, or methods of treatment adopted by the ancients in their ideal heads, and it has a peculiar individuality of feature and expression. The workmanship is not Greek, but Roman, and belongs to the period of Nero, or thereabouts. It strongly resembles in general character the portraits of Poppæa on the coins, and particularly a gem representing her in the possession of the Earl of Exeter. In all of them the eyes are deep-set, the orbit large, the chin full but slightly retreating, and the whole contour of the face similar. The forehead of the bust is low, as hers was; the hair is worn in the Roman fashion

of her time, and richly curls and waves, as did her amber locks. The air of the head, modestly inclined and full of sentiment, answers to the character and manner attributed to her by the ancient writers, who say that she affected at least a retiring and modest demeanor. The leaves of the sunflower only indicate an apotheosis of the person represented, and this would properly belong to Poppæa; for Nero, distracted by her death, which he had brought about himself in a moment of violent passion, ordered that she should be enrolled among the gods, and himself wrote her funeral eulogy, and presided at her apotheosis. If the leaves be those of the sunflower, as we call the heliotrope, — which is not certain, — there is also in this a peculiar appropriateness to Poppæa: for Nero called himself the son of Apollo, from whom he received his golden locks; and as Poppæa loved him, died by his hands, and had herself the same golden amber hair, they might as fitly surround her bust as Clytie's. These among others are my reasons for supposing this bust to be the portrait of Poppæa.

M. They certainly have a great deal of weight. Has this ever been suggested?

B. Not that I am aware of. But it is getting late, and you are not at the end of your notes, I see; pray let me have the rest.

M. I have only a few items more, and they chiefly refer to houses and real estates, which will indicate what were the probable fortunes of some

of the Romans of position. Marcus Gabius Apicius, one of the three notorious gluttons, all of whom bore the same surname, after squandering a fortune on the pleasures of the table, left behind him in real estate over £807,000, so that, had he lived, he might have gone on eating for a considerable time longer. Marcus Licinius Crassus, who fought with Sulla against Marius in the Civil War, and who was so avid of money that nothing would satisfy his greed, was also as liberal in the dispensing of it. When he was Consul with Pompey, for instance, he gave a public banquet to the people, at which 10,000 tables were spread. He had immense numbers of slaves, to whom he gave a good education, and trained them to various arts, exploited to his own benefit their labors in working his silver-mines, cultivating his farms, and practicing numerous trades. His wealth must have been, according to all accounts, immense; but his real estate on his death was only valued at about £1,614,583, showing that the greater portion of his fortune was not in land.

B. Poor Crassus! After all his victories and all his fortunes, he met with a sad end. Defeat, if I remember right, overtook him somewhere in Mesopotamia, — that soothing and religious word, — in an encounter with the Parthians; and Orodes, the Parthian king, after cutting off his head, poured molten gold into his mouth, saying, "Sate thyself now with the metal of which in thy life thou wast so greedy." This was mere wantonness of waste. I think I do not admire Orodes.

M. Then there was Pallas, the curled darling and lover of Agrippina, who was enormously rich, and to whom Juvenal alludes as a type of wealthy men in the line, "Ego possideo plus Pallante et Licinio." He left a handsome estate in land — I speak only of land now — of some £2,921,875. Then there was Seneca, the philosopher and moralist, who always preached the virtues of poverty and self-denial, and professed the virtues of Stoicism, who left about the same amount, given to him in great part, I suppose, by Nero; and Lentulus, whose real estate amounted to about £3,229,166; and Isodoros, who disposed by will of 416 slaves, 3,660 yoke of oxen, and 257,000 other cattle. These were all fairly well off, one might say; but apparently Marcus Scaurus was superior to them all in wealth. His luxury and extravagance were amazing. One may judge of his wealth by a single fact. He at one time erected a temporary theatre for the people, which was only in use for a month. This theatre was of three stories, supported on 360 columns. The first and principal story was of marble; the second of glass, an unheard-of luxury in those days; and the third of gilded wood. The lowest columns were thirty-eight feet in height, and between them were placed no less than 3,000 brass statues. Please to think of this for a moment: Here was a private man who could place 3,000 brass statues of his own in a temporary theatre; and from the height of the columns, these statues must have been colossal or at

least heroic in size, or they would have produced no effect. But to go on with the theatre. The area afforded accommodation for 80,000 spectators, — nearly as many as the Colosseum; and the interior fittings, consisting of attalic vestments enwoven with gold tissues, and the embroideries, pictures, and stage properties, were of the most gorgeous character. When the theatre was abandoned, as it was in a month, such portions of the fittings, and paraphernalia, and ornament, etc., as were not required by him for his daily enjoyment in Rome, were carried to his villa in Tusculum. Shortly afterwards his servants burnt this villa out of revenge for some injury, and his loss by this fire was estimated at no less than 300 millions of sesterces, or about £2,656,250. You may imagine, therefore, what his total fortune amounted to.

B. All I have to say is, that, if they possessed such fortunes as these, I only wonder they did not pay a little more for pictures and statues. I begin to think that £20,000 for a statue has a character of meanness about it. I wonder they were not ashamed to offer such ridiculously small prices. But one question more: What has become of all this gold?

M. What becomes of pins? Where do the millions upon millions go that are manufactured every year? Where the gold went, in all probability. Still, I cannot but think that great quantities of gold still remain deposited in secret hiding-places under ground, some of which chance

may yet discover to us. It seems impossible that it can utterly have disappeared.

B. And the pearls, emeralds, diamonds, and all the precious stones: where are they? Where are Lollia's forty millions? Where is Julius Cæsar's pearl?

M. Echo is the only authority on this question, and cries, Where?

B. Where are all these splendid statues of antiquity, to whose care men were pledged with their lives? They have perished or disappeared as a stone in the sea, and no one knows when, how, or where. Is it not possible that many of them still remain — buried out of sight — hidden in the earth?

M. I have little doubt of it, but the difficulty is to know where.

B. Let us go and find them.

M. Andiam.

II.

Belton. I have been thinking of our conversation the other day about pictures and statues, and the enormous prices they brought in ancient days, and I have come to the conclusion that I ought to imitate them in their generosity. So I have come over here to offer you two millions of sesterces for that work you are engaged upon. Now I have said this, I feel as if a burden were lifted from my mind. I hope you do not think the price too small?

Mallett. I am exceedingly obliged to you for your offer, but I no longer sell my works. Having amassed a fortune of three billiards (I suppose that is the next sum above milliards), it suffices for my small wants; and I now give my works away, and I mean to present this to you, if you will accept it.

B. I am delighted to accept it, and I shall put it in charge of my valet Charles, making him responsible for it with his life. That is the sure way, I think. I desire to do the right thing in the old way, — "Stare super antiquas vias."

M. Your offer reminds me of a story my father used to tell of an incident that happened to him in his early practice of the law. An eccentric old

gentleman of his acquaintance called upon him one day, and asked him to draw up a will for him. "Certainly," said my father; "explain to me how you wish to dispose of your property, and I will make a note of your wishes, and put them into regular form." So the old gentleman began: "I wish to give a hundred thousand dollars to my old friend, Alexander Tomkins. Poor man! he is not very well off in worldly fortune; but he is an excellent person, and I think this sum would make him comfortable for life. Please note that down. Then another hundred thousand to Mrs. Elizabeth Jones. I was in love with her once, but she married Jones, and Jones has left her poor. Then there is young Maulstick. He is showing a good deal of talent, but he is suffering from the 'res angustæ domi,' — married a poor, pretty girl, — the old story. Put him down at $50,000. And put down $50,000 to the hospital of decayed gentlewomen. It is an excellent institution." My father paused, and looking up said: "I am delighted to see by these dispositions of your property that you are so rich. I had no idea that you possessed such a fortune." "Fortune?" said the old gentleman; "God bless you, I have no fortune! I am a poor man." "Poor?" said my father; "why, you have already disposed to strangers of $300,000, and as I suppose you mean to leave your family at least an equal amount, I should scarcely call you a poor man." "Bless your soul," said the old gentleman, "my whole worldly possessions would not amount

to one tenth of the sums I have named, but I put them down in my will to show what I would do if I had such a fortune. I wish to show my good will to all those friends."

B. That is precisely my case. Excellent old man! I wish I had known him. Do you know it reminds me of the will of one of the great men of America, who died not many years ago. He had, as he said, lived like a gentleman all his life,— meaning, of course, that he had spent all he could get and considerably more, and was head over ears in debt; but, like this old gentleman of whom you spoke, he made a will disposing of large sums just as if he had them, and leaving his real estate, which was mortgaged to the full value, to his heirs, remarking coolly that "means would be found to carry his intentions into effect."

M. Ay, I remember the fact very well, and I remember also that means were found, and that a large sum was raised by public subscription to pay off his debts and carry his intentions into effect. I wonder if the public would do that for us?

B. Immediately after his death a statue was proposed to be erected to him, and in view of the debts he owed, Outis suggested that it should be cast in brass from the *ære alieno* he left.

M. Bravo! And I believe it was the same person who remarked on hearing that this same great personage had paid the debt of nature, "Thank God! It is the only debt I ever knew him pay."

B. Do you know that all these figures and sums and prices in yesterday's talk got so into my head that they pirouetted through it all night long in a mad, tangled way, and when I got up this morning I felt as if I, too, were a millionaire. "Anchè Io son pittore!" I cried; and added "e millionario."

M. I hope I did not bore you, but the fact is, I "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

B. On the whole, on serious reflection, I begin to think you invented it all. "I am not good at these numbers," as Hamlet says, and I half suspect you were amusing yourself at my expense. I don't think I quite understand millions; but when it comes to milliards, I lose my mind. That is, I suppose, one reason why French sums in the large distress me. Simply to call their public debt x, representing the unknown quantity, is to me quite as definite as to call it so many milliards.

M. It is an absurd currency. You might as well talk of large sums in centimes as in francs. The denominator is too low for anything but small sums, and in fact is too low to reckon even common fortunes, much less any large transaction of banking or commerce.

B. Ah, but it sounds so big! It does not seem much to have 10,000 pounds sterling. That is too easily grasped, too definite; but 250,000 francs begins to sound like something, and 25,000,000 of centimes makes one rich at once. The French like to talk big, and so it suits them.

M. Their currency would be good if the names

alone were changed, leaving the coins as they are. Instead of talking of centimes and francs, if they would say sous and écus, their money would be simpler, and more fitted to the prices and expenses of to-day. The currency is just as decimal with the sous and the five-franc piece as with the centime and the franc, and by making the gold napoleon 25 fr. they would equalize it with the pound sterling of England and the half eagle of America. The present decimal in France is not only a sham in itself, — for the centime is almost an unused coin, — but you always have three figures instead of two in reckoning small sums, 3 fr. 25 to add to 4 fr. 45, instead of 65 sous to add to 49. So that with these small sums one is always obliged to make the addition on paper, and to pay in sous what is charged in centimes.

B. For heaven's sake let us talk no more about money! It gives me a feeling of oppression and indigestion.

M. Agreed, with all my heart.

B. It is this cursed greed of money, "*auri sacra fames*," that corrupts art and makes it a business, — a commercial operation, — or at least degrades it to a trade. Unless a man love and practice art for its own sake, and from pure love of it, he will never make a great artist. Art is a jealous mistress: she will have an undivided affection and devotion, or she will hide her face and refuse her favors. But with art now it is as it is with matrimony: as marriages are made for money and not for love —

the great question being, not of affection, but of interest, — so art is embraced as a profession, or practiced at least for what it brings in money.

M. Yes, the moment art becomes a business it is degraded. It should be worshiped as a divinity, pursued purely from love, followed from enthusiasm, wooed with one's whole heart, desired as an end, not as a means. It is as impossible to worship art and mammon together as God and mammon. It demands all one's soul, and heart, and intellect, — ay, and even that is too little. To gain entrance to the ideal regions to which it ever points, one must surrender one's self wholly to its guidance and inspiration, strain all one's faculties, give all one's life. The best that we can give is but little, but the rewards are great. Following art in such spirit, it refines and idealizes the world about us, lifts us into regions of delight above the low bases of material existence, and gives to the common daily facts of life a new interest and a transfigured beauty. To the artist, everything is picture, and poetry, and color, and feeling. To the farmer, it is so much corn and potatoes, and so many pounds in pocket. Each reaps his own harvest. Nature gives us what we seek, and reflects back to us what we are. Everything depends on the spirit with which we approach it: we can only find what we bring; the key to all secrets we must carry in ourselves.

B. You remind me of an incident which happened to a friend of mine, a charming companion

and a true poet. He was returning home one magnificent moonlight night in early summer along a country road, his spirit filled with the mysterious charm and beauty of the scene, and his vague thoughts wandering in an ideal haze of half-dreaming, when he heard the rattle of a cart slowly creaking along the road. Looking up, he recognized the butcher of the village, and as he passed he greeted him with, "Good evening, B," — adding, out of the fullness of his heart, "what an exquisite night!" "Yes," was the butcher's answer; "fine night for slaughter." That was his notion of all the beauty that surrounded him. He was dreaming of fat bullocks and the business of his trade. The world to him was a slaughter-house.

M. Precisely. Never to him did "jocund day stand tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops," nor did the moonlight sleep on any bank. That needed Shakespeare.

B. Oh, but Shakespeare knew him, too, and all his class, for he knew everbody. The moonlight awoke a scarcely higher sense of beauty in Bottom, or in Bardolph, Gadshill, Poins, and Peto. It was to the latter a fine night to take purses. The grave-digger in Hamlet had no feeling of his business: "he sang at grave-digging," and knocked about the mazard of Yorick recklessly with his spade. And Mr. Justice Shallow mixed up his score of ewes at Stamford fair with his casual regret over old Double's death. Shakespeare well knew that every "nature is subdued to what it works in, like a dyer's hand."

M. "Certain, 't is certain; 't is very sure, very sure: death, the Psalmist saith, is certain to all; all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?"

B. "Truly, cousin, I was not there."

M. "Death is certain. Is old Double of your town living yet?"

B. "Dead, sir."

M. "Jesu! Jesu! dead! — he drew a good bow! — and dead? — he shot a fine shoot. John o' Gaunt loved him well, and betted much money on his head. Dead! — he would have clapped i' the clout at twelve score; and carried you a forehand shaft at fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see. How a score of ewes now?"

B. "Thereafter as they be; a score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds?"

M. "And is old Double dead!"

B. Can anything be more masterly than that? — more absolutely true to nature?

M. Nothing. But Shallow is equally admirable throughout. Nothing can be more wonderful in color and drawing than his portrait. There is not a touch that is not like life. I should like to quote every word of his, if I had time, — or better, to sit in his arbor, and eat a last year's pippin of his own grafting, with a dish of caraways, and so forth.

B. Barren, barren, barren, — beggars all, Sir John.

M. What a wonderful man Shakespeare was!

— and what an artist! All things turned to poetry in his mind, — the commonest as well as the rarest. Nature seemed to deny him nothing. Speaking in an artistic sense, I know not which most to wonder at, his colossal power of passion, as in Lear and Othello; his immense humor, as in Falstaff and Bottom; or his finesse and felicity of touch in characters of mere nonsense and triviality, such as Slender. All his fools are different and individual, and so are his cowards. Compare for an instant Parolles and Falstaff, both cowards, but how utterly unlike! Again, see the superstitious cowardice of Macbeth. How entirely new a note is here struck! Sometimes it is only a single phrase with which he gives you a character. He draws him with a line. Starveling, the tailor, only speaks twice, and not twenty words; but there he is, as real as if he had talked an hour. So is Francis, with his "Anon, anon, sir!" and so are Feeble, and Bullcalf, and Davy. There is not much of Davy, but how perfectly drawn he is in those few strokes! Nor are the two Carriers in the inn-yard at Rochester a whit less vigorous and vivid. His little persons are wonderful, and in his great characters he rises to a height of power and passion which has never been approached. The greater the occasion, the greater the power. And with what art is it all done! Think of the scene between Othello and Iago, when that consummate villain first fans in him the flames of jealousy. What nature, what truth, what art! You see the little

flickering flame growing and growing till it bursts forth at last into a fierce conflagration of wild, ungovernable rage. Would any one but he ever have dared to put into Othello's mouth such words as "Not a jot — not a jot," that cover such a depth of emotion, or make Lear say, "I prithee undo this button"?

B. You call him an artist, and you praise him for his art. Is it not strange that *that* was the very quality in which he apparently thought he was deficient, and which his contemporaries denied him? They praised him for his natural spirit and vivacity, — for his untrained genius, and for his sweetness and gentleness; but in his art they held him to be inferior to Ben Jonson. Even Milton unworthily speaks of him as —

> "Nature's darling child,
> Who warbles forth his woodnotes wild."

M. It is a great mistake, however, to suppose that his contemporaries did not set a high value on his dramatic works. Ben Jonson's verses prefixed to the folio of 1623 are noble verses, and worthy their great theme. Yet undoubtedly he was too near his age then to have his greatness fitly gauged. One must have distance to estimate the comparative height of mountains. It is only when you are far away that you see the lofty peaks towering far above the smaller ones, which looked when near them almost of the same height, or perhaps even higher.

B. No doubt. And to his contemporaries, the

learned Ben seemed a greater artist than Shakespeare, with his small Latin and less Greek. Ben had less facility, in their estimation, — fewer natural gifts, — but better intellectual training and more art. His characters were more academic; his plays more by rule and plumb; his diction more artificial.

M. But he did not fill the house as Shakespeare did, which plainly shows the popularity he had with the public. They better liked his humor than Ben's humors, and his passion than Ben's stateliness, and "that 's the humor of it," as Pistol says.

B. But even as a dramatist, Shakespeare seems to have thought himself in the second rank. He was utterly without vanity, and almost, it would seem, without ambition. I suppose he wrote his plays with such ease, his whole soul and heart being on fire with them, so to speak, that he counted them as little. No doubt he did pride himself on his poems, his "sugared sonnets," for he took great pains with them, and looked over them, and saw that they were correctly printed, and perhaps supposed he should be known to posterity, if known at all, chiefly by them; while it is certain that he took no care of his plays, or at least never collected them, and not only never printed them himself, but allowed them to be surreptitiously printed, and with every sort of blunder and incorrectness. Had he estimated them very highly, it seems impossible that, after his retirement to Stratford-on-Avon, he should not have done so. But we have

his own evidence as to what he thought of his works in one of his sonnets, in which he says: —

> "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
> Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
> With what I most enjoy, contented least," etc.

Think of it, — "desiring this man's art and that man's scope," he whose art and scope were so wonderful! Well, whose art was it that he desired? Plainly Ben Jonson's, who arrogated the particular quality to himself of artist, and considered himself in this respect superior to all other writers of his time, and whose language in regard to Shakespeare shows that, much as he admired his natural genius, he thought he did little justice to it, through his carelessness in writing. So, as persistent and swelling men are often taken by their contemporaries at their own estimation, Shakespeare, as well as all the public, accepted Ben Jonson as the head man of his day in dramatic literature.

M. It seems astonishing to us. For, after all, Ben Jonson does not in our estimation stand even next to Shakespeare. His humors seem strained, his stateliness is somewhat pedantic, and his comedy rather cut-and-dried.

B. But listen to Shakespeare again, and hear his regrets about himself: —

"Alas! 't is true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear."

And again in the succeeding sonnet: —

"Oh for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means, which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

And still further: —

"Your love and pity doth the impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill?"

M. There is no doubt from his sonnets that he sometimes took sad views of life and of himself, but he did not, I fancy, long continue in that state. I have no doubt, too, that he estimated very highly the art of Ben Jonson and his cumbrous learning, and it would seem that, in some measure at least, he was influenced by him to use broken lines in his later blank verse to a very large extent. But the person who most influenced him in style, as well as in method, was a much greater man than Ben Jonson, and, in my opinion, the greatest of all the old dramatists after Shakespeare himself, and that was Christopher Marlowe. I found my judgment, indeed, not so much on what he accomplished, as for the immense promise it contained; but what he accomplished was most remarkable. It was he who gave the grand rhythmic flow to

English blank verse, and built the mighty line before Shakespeare. For mere versification, there is almost nothing of that period that can be placed beside some passages, — as, for instance, the opening scene in his "Jew of Malta." The play offends good taste and is full of horrors. The Jew is the old Jew of the day, exaggerated and somewhat grotesque even in his crimes; but there is a great poet at work in it all. Shakespeare, I doubt not, knew every word by heart; and in the opening scene of the "Merchant of Venice" one can feel that the sound of its verse was in the ear of Shakespeare constantly. But what a stride he made beyond it in the conduct and character of the play! Nothing better shows the superiority of Shakespeare to all his contemporaries and predecessors than the use he made of materials already existing. Still he owed a great deal to Marlowe, at least in the form of his versification, as well as in the method of his historical plays. Take, for instance, Marlowe's "Jew of Malta" in its opening passages, and compare it with the writing of any other dramatist, and you will find it quite different in style from anything that preceded it; but in its versification there is a strong resemblance to that of the "Merchant of Venice." Thus Marlowe in the "Jew of Malta" says: —

> "This is the ware wherein consists my wealth;
> And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
> Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,
> And, as their wealth increaseth, so enclose
> Infinite riches in a little room.

But now how stands the wind ?
Into what corner peers my halcyon's bill ?
Ha ! to the east ? yes. See how stand the vanes ?
East and by south : why, then, I hope my ships
I sent for Egypt and the bordering isles
Are gotten up by Nilus' winding banks ;
Mine argosy from Alexandria,
Loaden with spice and silks, now under sail,
Are smoothly gliding down by Candy shore
To Malta, through the Mediterranean Sea."

I cannot but think that Salarino, in the first scene of the "Merchant of Venice," remembered that "argosy loaden with spice and silks" when he spoke of Antonio's "argosies with portly sail," and thought of "dangerous rocks," —

"Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream ;
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks," etc.

So, too, compare these two passages. Barabas, Marlowe's Jew, says : —

"Thus trolls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus are we on every side enriched :
These are the blessings promised to the Jews,
And herein was old Abram's happiness :
What more may Heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps ?

SHYLOCK.

"This was a way to thrive, and he was blest :
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

ANTONIO.

"This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for ;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But swayed and fashioned by the hand of Heaven."

Or take these : —

BARABAS.

"Well, then, my lord, say, are you satisfied?
You have my goods, my money, and my wealth,
My ships, my store, and all that I enjoyed;
And, having all, you can request no more,
Unless your unrelenting, flinty hearts
Suppress all pity in your stony breasts,
And now shall move you to bereave my life;
. . . . . .
You have my wealth, the labor of my life,
The comfort of mine age, my children's hope.

GOVERNOR.

"Content thee, Barabas, thou hast naught but right."

And then hear —

SHYLOCK.

"Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

PORTIA.

"Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?"

Again, Barabas says: —

"I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,
Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
And duck as low as any bare-foot friar;
Hoping to see them starve upon a stall,
Or else be gathered for in our synagogue,
That, when the offering-basin comes to me,
Even for charity I may spit into 't."

Shylock says: —

"Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.[1]
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat, dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine. . . .

[1] "For through our sufferance of your hateful lives," says Marlowe.

> Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
> With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
> Say this: Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
> You spurned me such a day, another time
> You called me dog?"

Is it not plain that Shakespeare, in writing this, had Marlowe's play in his ear and mind? You have, beside the general resemblance of rhythm, such corresponding phrases as "duck as low," and "shall I bend low," "heave up my shoulders," "with a silent shrug," "they called me dog," "you called me dog," and the spitting as an indication of scorn: as for the rhythm, one passage reads after the other with scarce a break of movement. Or compare, again, "his daughter and his ducats" of Shylock, with "O girl, O gold," of Barabas. But take another passage of a later date from Marlowe's "Edward II.," and a grand passage, too, worthy of Shakespeare. Edward says: —

> "The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
> But not of kings. The forest deer being struck
> Runs to a herb that closeth up the wounds;
> But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
> He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw;
> And, highly scorning that the lowly earth
> Should drink his blood, mounts upward to the air.
> And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind
> The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb."

Compare in "Henry VI." (act v. sc. 6), —

> "What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
> Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted."

Or from "Richard II." (act v. sc. 1), —

> "The lion, dying, thrusteth forth his paw
> And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage."

Or, again, in Richard's death, —

"Exton, thy fierce hand
Hath with the king's blood stained the king's own land.
Mount, mount, my soul. Thy seat is up on high,
While my gross flesh sinks downward here to die."

Or, again, compare the rhythm of such passages as these, and I think you must feel how strongly influenced in his versification Shakespeare was by Marlowe. In "Faust" Helen appears, and he says: —

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And fired the topmost towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!
Brighter thou art than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele."

Romeo says: —

"Oh, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to the night, being o'er my head,
As is the wingèd messenger of heaven
Unto the white, upturned, wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air."

Are they not apparently out of the same mint? Or, again, compare Marlowe's Edward with Shakespeare's Romeo in these two passages: —

ROMEO.

"Gallop apace, ye fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phœbus' lodging. Such a wagoner
As Phæton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.

EDWARD.

"Gallop apace, bright Phœbus, through the sky,
And dusky Night, in rusty iron car,
Between you both shorten the time, I pray,
That I may see that most desired day."

Or, once more, compare this passage from Marlowe's "Edward II." —

"But stay! what star shines yonder in the East?
The load-star of my life, — of Abigail."

with Shakespeare's

"But see! what light from yonder window shines?
It is the East — and Juliet is the sun."

But to leave this question, which might be illustrated very much farther until it got to be a bore, have you read Marlowe's translation of Lucan?

B. Yes, and it is wonderful. Lucan in his hands becomes a poet such as he never was in his native tongue. Take, for instance, this extraordinary passage: —

"Strange sights appeared, — the angry threatening gods
Filled both the earth and seas with prodigies.
Great store of strange and unknown stars were seen
Wandering about the north, and rings of fire
Fly in the air, and dreadful bearded stars,
And comets that presage the fall of kingdoms.
The flattering sky glittered in often flames,
And sundry fiery meteors blazed in heaven,
Now spearlike long, now like a spreading torch.
Lightning in silence stole forth without clouds.
. . . . . .
The Earth went off her hinges; and the Alps
Shook the old snow from off their trembling laps."

M. That certainly is very fine. Still, in my opinion, the greatest of his plays is his last, the

"Edward II.," which Shakespeare to a certain extent imitated in his "Richard II." The last scene of the death of the king in Berkeley Castle is masterly, — at once simple, powerful, natural, and passionate, — and loses nothing in comparison with the death of Richard. It led the way to those great historical plays of Shakespeare, and placed dramatic history on a new and higher plane than it ever before had occupied.

B. Have you a copy of Marlowe here? If you have, pray read you this scene, if you are not already tired.

M. Oh, yes! here is a copy; I'll read it with pleasure. Lightborn, you remember, is sent to murder Edward, while Matrevis and Gurney await outside.

LIGHTBORN.

"Foh! here 's a place indeed, with all my heart!

EDWARD.

"Who 's there? what light is that? wherefore com'st thou?

LIGHTBORN.

"To comfort you, and bring you joyful news.

EDWARD.

"Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.
Villain, I know thou com'st to murder me.

LIGHTBORN.

"To murder you, my most gracious lord!
Far is it from my heart to do you harm.
The queen sent me to see how you were used,
For she relents at this your misery.
And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears
To see a king in this most piteous state?

EDWARD.

"Weep'st thou already? list awhile to me,
And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,
Or as Matrevis', hewn from the Caucasus,
Yet will it melt ere I have done my tale.
This dungeon where they keep me is the sink
Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

LIGHTBORN.

"O villains!

EDWARD.

"And there, in mire and puddle, have I stood
This ten days' space; and lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually upon a drum.
They give me bread and water, being a king, —
So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
My mind 's distempered, and my body 's numbed,
And whether I have limbs or no, I know not.
Oh, would my blood dropped out from every vein
As doth this water from my tattered robes!
Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont.

LIGHTBORN.

"Oh, speak no more, my lord! this breaks my heart.
Lie on this bed and rest yourself awhile.

EDWARD.

"These looks of thine can harbor nought but death!
I see my tragedy written on thy brows.
Yet stay; awhile forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then, when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God.

LIGHTBORN.

"What means your highness to mistrust me thus?

EDWARD.

"What mean'st thou to dissemble with me thus?

LIGHTBORN.

"These hands were never stained with innocent blood,
Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.

EDWARD.

"Forgive my thought for having such a thought.
One jewel have I left; receive thou this.
Still fear I, and I know not what 's the cause,
But every joint shakes as I give it thee.
Oh, if thou harbor'st murder in thy heart,
Let this gift change thy mind and save thy soul!
Know that I am a king: oh, at that name
I feel a hell of grief! Where is my crown?
Gone, gone, — and do I remain alive?

LIGHTBORN.

"You 're over-watched, my lord; lie down and rest.

EDWARD.

"But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep;
For not these ten days have these eyelids closed.
Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear
Open again. Oh, wherefore sit'st thou here?

LIGHTBORN.

"If you mistrust me, I 'll begone, my lord.

EDWARD.

"No! no! for if thou mean'st to murder me,
Thou wilt return again; and therefore stay.

LIGHTBORN.

"He sleeps.

EDWARD (*awakes*).

"Oh, let me not die yet; stay, oh, stay awhile.

LIGHTBORN.

"How now, my lord?

EDWARD.

"Something still buzzeth in mine ears,

And tells me, if I sleep, I never wake.
This fear is that which makes me tremble thus;
And therefore tell me wherefore art thou come?

LIGHTBORN.

"To rid thee of thy life. Matrevis, come.

EDWARD.

"I am too weak and feeble to resist:
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul."

B. Certainly that is a very powerful scene.

M. When one thinks that that was written before Marlowe was twenty-eight years of age, and probably before any play of Shakespeare, — unless, perhaps, his very earliest, — we may realize what we have lost by his early death. After all, the promise of Marlowe was as great as that of Shakespeare. And had Shakespeare died at the same age, there would have been little difference between them. But Marlowe was only just gathering together his powers, and learning to guide them steadily to great ends, when death overtook him, and in so ignominious a manner as to make our grief for his loss still greater. Nothing in all his life became him so little as his leaving it, if tradition be true.

B. He was, if I recollect right, killed in a drunken tavern brawl, when he was only twenty-eight years old. And all the great works that he might have written were lost to us forever. Suppose we had lost Shakespeare at that age?

M. I cannot suppose it. There is no other life we could not better blot out in all English history.

Other losses might have been repaired, but his never. He holds together all our literature. Our language is embedded in his works; we speak Shakespeare, even when we know it not.

B. You remind me of a story I heard the other day of an English swell, whose education, whatever it might have been in Greek and Latin (as much perhaps as Shakespeare's, according to Ben Jonson's sneer), was not liberally endowed with English literature. Some of his friends persuaded him to go and hear "Hamlet," which was then playing in London. On his return he was asked how he liked it, and he said, "Very nice, very nice, but awfully full of quotations."

M. Faith! I don't wonder he thought so. It was a very honest criticism. But think what a hold Shakespeare has upon all our life and language when such a story is possible even in jest! I sometimes wonder, if a play of Shakespeare should now be discovered quite equal to his best, and published anonymously, what effect it would produce. Do you think that the critics would accept it?

B. Who can say? Of course, they would find it full of defects, and wanting utterly in originality; but they might pat it on the head and patronize it.

M. In my native town, some years ago, there was a man poorly educated, and utterly ignorant of Shakespeare. Don't smile. There are a great many quite as ignorant of his works, who talk a great deal about him, and use his name constantly.

But this man was not familiar even with his name, or at all events did not know that he was not still living.

B. Well, so he is.

M. True, but not in that sense. Well, it happened that, at the time of which I speak, Dickens was publishing his novels in parts; and an edition of Shakespeare's plays also was coming out in numbers, and my friend (every man is my friend who likes Shakespeare) took in both, thinking them contemporaneous writers. One day he went to the publishers, and in rather an excited tone said, "When is the next number of Shakespeare coming out?" "Not for a fortnight," was the answer. "Well," he replied, "I wish you'd be in a hurry about it, — I'm tired of waiting. You see you've left me in a most interesting *part* in the middle of 'Othello;' and I want to know how the whole thing ends. So hurry up the thing as fast as you can."

B. An honest admirer, — a thousand times more honest than many a one who praises with his lips. This was a real interest. I wish I could read "Othello" for the first time.

M. Oh no, you don't. That would be too great a loss.

B. True: I take it back. I never said so.

M. It provokes me to be told, as I am constantly told, that the Germans appreciate Shakespeare more than the English, and that they have taught us of late truly to estimate him. I am sick

of hearing of Schlegel, and Goethe, and the rest, and what they say. We might just as well tell the Italians that we English understand Dante better than they do. Some of the German criticism on Shakespeare is as bad as Voltaire's. Dr. Roderick Benedix, himself a dramatist, has perhaps even surpassed him. He thinks that none of Shakespeare's creations are equal to many by the German play-writers, as, for instance, to Lessing's "Nathan the Wise," or Schiller's "Karl Moor," "Wallenstein," and "Philip II." But the very best of their criticism is not worth much. Even Goethe's "Analysis of Hamlet," much as it has been praised, seems very poor to me — not to be mentioned for insight and sympathetic sense with, for instance, Lamb, Coleridge, or Hazlitt. The single phrase of Hazlitt, "We are all of us Hamlet," is worth all that Goethe and Schlegel ever wrote. Not that I count for much the English criticism on Shakespeare, which is very traditional for the most part, and greatly overshadowed by stage influences. For instance, Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth are one thing in Shakespeare, and quite another thing in the public mind, where they take the form and shape of Mrs. Siddons and the Kembles. But the Germans have the vice of anatomizing Shakespeare, and laying him out into parts and pieces, and admiring the worst as much as the best. They find admirable reasons to show that the notoriously ungenuine parts of his plays are as admirable as the others. When they once

go in to praise, they praise everything. They select "Cymbeline" for public performance at his anniversary, as one of his great plays, and admire it throughout, the interpolated passages as much as the genuine ones.

Nothing can be more absurd in many respects than Bürger's translation of "Macbeth." Poet, though he was, he seems to have lost all sense of poetry or reason in this translation, in which, in fact, he so ludicrously travesties the original, that one cannot but smile at the absurdities he introduces. The fact is, that Bürger, who was a very vain man, thought himself far superior to Shakespeare, and kindly assisted him, and eked out his shortcomings. Think of this opening in "Macbeth": —

"*Soldier.* Hold! not in such a hurry, good sir.
Guard. Now, then?
Sold. I prithee, what is it you will tell the king?
Guard. That the battle is won.
Sold. But I have been lying.
Guard. Lying rascal! Then thou art indeed with thy wounds a desperate joker."

This is a literal translation of one of Bürger's improvements to Shakespeare.

B. You must be joking.

M. Neither I nor Bürger. This was his notion of Shakespeare. Schlegel was far better than this; but Schlegel was not original in his views, and took nearly all his notions from Coleridge; and as for Tieck, he was ready to think anything was by Shakespeare — even "Fair Em" and the

"Tyrant" of Massinger; and he also thought Shakespeare wrote Greene's "Friar Bacon," and the "Prince of Wakefield," and "Locrine," and "The Merry Devil of Edmonton," and many others. In fact, take the German criticism on Shakespeare for all in all, it seems to me to be very commonplace. It is vehement and indiscriminate in its praise as in its blame, without any true critical sense. It is the same in their criticism of art. Look, for instance, at Goethe's critique on the Laocoön.

B. You mean Lessing's?

M. No, I mean Goethe's, — Lessing's is quite another affair. He has written a most elaborate criticism on this group, in which he finds everything perfect, everything done in the highest spirit, with the clearest intelligence and insight, and with a perfection of execution as great as the conception is wonderful. The ancient Greeks are the greatest sculptors, and this is the greatest of their works, and without a single defect. In fact, it is a cut-and-dried panegyric, by a man who had no knowledge of his subject, who was determined to find that "whatever is, is right," and whose enthusiasm is all literary and second-hand. We are told to admire, with upraised hands, the defects, as much as the merits. It was a subtle and exquisite thought to make the serpent, while he crushed the group with his folds, also bite the most sensitive part of the father, and so make him shrink away; and it is no matter at all that the

serpent who crushes does not bite. It was an admirable conception to make the sons two little, fully-developed men, one third the size of their father, instead of children. The restored parts are admirable also, and there is here a good deal of feeble philosophizing and artistic metaphysics to round the whole.

B. You are very hard on Goethe.

M. I know I am. I suppose I feel as the ancient Athenian did about Aristides: I cannot bear to hear him called the artist, any more than he to hear the great statesman called the Just. Artist! Despite his large talent and his many accomplishments, he is utterly without that innate enthusiasm, that fiery impulse, that self-surrender to passion for his work that alone can make an artist in the true sense of the word. He was essentially cold of nature, and his work is generally cold. He prepared himself elaborately for all his writings, arranged his materials with patience, and having got them all ready, sat down with deliberation to put them together, and work them into shape in the most mechanical way. He laid up his observations as one makes a *hortus siccus*, and put them into his work like so many fragments of mosaic. He could not give way to his enthusiasm, but insisted on governing it. He never was possessed, rapt, lifted out of himself, carried away by his theme. He drove his Pegasus in good German harness; Pegasus never ran or flew away with him. I put aside his "Faust," which is far his greatest work.

This he wrote in his youth, when he could not suppress his genius, which got the better of him, and in this one sees him at his highest. But this was before he was an artist in his sense, and while the enthusiasm of youth was in him, and would have its sway. Nearly all the rest of his life he was engaged at intervals on the second part of "Faust," piecing it out mechanically, and endeavoring to give some real shape to mere *disjecta membra*, which he never could put together into any definite completeness. The result of all his art was to huddle together an unintelligible mass of myth and history, without beginning, middle, or end. When his genius carried him away he was great, and the first part of "Faust" has scenes of great power both of conception and execution.

B. Ah, well, I breathe again. After all, it is something to have written one great work.

M. It is, but it is the story of Marguerite which alone interests us. Faust is a colorless walking gentleman, without character or individuality, and there is no real "motif," to use Goethe's word, for Marguerite's conduct.

B. Pray leave Goethe alone — we shall never agree about him. I have heard you before on this subject, and I say with Galileo, "E pure si muove." I know "Wilhelm Meister" bores you, and the "Elective Affinities" is, according to you, a mechanical mosaic; but I don't agree with you.

M. Yes, if Goethe talked no better than the characters of those two novels, I am not sorry I

never knew him. I am tired to death of gardens, and the way they should be laid out, and I do not admire his theatrical discussions; and his characters, except when they are reminiscences of particular persons, are to me thoroughly mechanical.

B. Let us get back to Shakespeare, where we can agree.

M. Shakespeare's plays *grow*. All others, more or less, are *constructed*, built up mechanically part by part; while Shakespeare's grow and develop, one joint out of another, one branch and twig out of another — naturally, freely, unexpectedly — as a tree grows. This is true not only of the characters but of the conduct of each play, and especially of the later ones. Take Othello, for instance, and see how his character develops with circumstances; how the restrained passion of his nature, which gives at first only a genial glow to his bearing, finally bursts forth into an overpowering fury, breaks down all the safeguards of his judgment, destroys his dignity, and ruins his reason. Goethe's plays, on the contrary, are mechanically laid out like a garden-plot, and all his pretty flowers, exotic or natural, are planted in them artificially. They do not grow there by their own sweet will, do not flower out of the theme, but are grafted on it. They do not make themselves, but are made by him. Two and two always make four, but in life they sometimes make five. There 's a daring truth of unexpectedness in Shakespeare, as there is in nature. His characters do not say what you

expect, but what their nature prompts. A tree has its law, but it also has its whim and caprice, and one limb and branch is not balanced against another geometrically, as it is in Goethe's plays. In all the deviousness of outline in nature, there is at once the characteristic and the capricious. In Goethe's "Tasso," for instance, you can forecast everything that each character will say and think, but you cannot do this with Hamlet and Othello and Lear.

B. The world is against you in your estimate of Goethe, and I am against you. But don't let us discuss him any farther. You will not convince me. Let us talk about something we agree upon. As to what you say of the German critics of Shakespeare, of course there is one side of him to us as wonderful as any, which they never can feel — I mean his language and his rhythm. No translation can give this, however well it may be done. There is a light, and life, and color in the words of our great poet that most of all is his, which makes them magical. To translate Shakespeare is as impossible as to copy Titian — ay, much more so; the outline, the story, the bones, remain, but the soul is gone — the essence, the ethereal light, the perfume, is vanished. Try in any of his great passages to replace a forgotten word, and you can never improve it. Nothing will fit it but the very word he used. If, then, we ourselves cannot translate or alter his language without loss, how is it possible that the whole should be transferred into

another language, with different idioms, and still preserve its quality? Take for instance this —

> "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
> Making the green — one red" —

and translate it, if you can. "Multitudinous seas" — what an expression! You feel the wide welter-ing waste of confused and tumbling waves around you in that single word. What beauty and wealth of color too in incarnadine, a word capable of dyeing an ocean! and then, after these grand polysylla-bles, how terse and stern comes in the solid Saxon, as if a vast cloud had condensed into great heavy drops — the green one red! Turn it into German if you can. Hitch together three or four monosyl-lables, and pretend they are one word, and see if they will give you the effect of that one great Latin multitudinous. Try much-folding, or many-fold-ing, or manifold ("viel-fältig" or "mannig-fäl-tig"), which are the nearest approximations in German to the sense and sound. Do they satisfy you? Or instead of incarnadine, take that poetic and noble German correlative "fleischfarben," to flesh-color; or substitute the German phrase, for it is not a word, "purpur roth farben;" or say in English, empurple, or make purple. It will not do — we cannot translate it even into English, much less into German.

M. How is it translated into German?

B. I don't remember, and I don't care. I know

only that it cannot be translated. All the magnificent diction is lost, and what is to make up for it? You get the sense, you say. The translation is literal. What is sense in poetry divorced from the form? The form is the essence. You pass the airy nothing through an alembic, and you get a *caput mortuum*. All the tone and perfume is gone. The dead words remain, but the music is fled. A translation is a traduction. It is not so much like the original thing as the reverse of a tapestry with all its threads and confused shapes and colors is like the soft picture on its face. And, with all this loss, to tell me that the Germans best understand Shakespeare, and that we must go to them to be taught is utter nonsense. I agree that they have honestly studied him and striven to appreciate him, and for this they have my heartiest recognition. But it is idle to think that they can teach us what Shakespeare is.

M. Translation is a very difficult art, and to translate a poet requires a poet. But this is not sufficient. The very selection of words often makes the utmost difference in the color, spirit, and fragrance of a poem. Goethe is the greatest poet of Germany, and a master in style, as you say; yet see how he translates the "Cinque Maggio," of Manzoni. For instance, you remember this magnificent passage in the original —

"Oh quante volte al tacito
Morir d'un giorno inerte
Chinati i rai fulminei

Le braccia al sen conserte
Stette — e dei dì che furono
L'assalse il sovvenir.

"E ripensò le mobili
Tende — ed i per cossi valli
E il lampo de' manipoli
E l'onda dei cavalli
E il concitato imperio
E il celere ubbidir."

Now see what becomes of this last verse in the German by even so skillful a hand as Goethe's: —

"Da schaut er die beweglichen
Zeltendurch schwimmelte Thäler
Das Wetter-leuchten der Waffen zu Fuss
Die Wälle reitender Männer
Die aufgeregteste Herrscherschaft
Und das allerschnellste Gehorchen."

Can anything be flatter than this? To say nothing of the total misapprehension of the meaning of "*i per cossi valli.*" Think of the

"Lampo dei manipoli
E l'onda dei cavalli,"

becoming —

"The weather-lighting of the arms on foot
The waves of riding men."

B. Oh, that is hardly fair. *Wetter-leuchten* is lightning — not weather-shining.

M. Ah, there it is. *Wetter* means simply weather, and *leuchten* simply shining, and you put them both together for lightning. With such a word the lightning would certainly take its own time. *Blitz*, at all events, is sharp and quick — but *wetter-leuchten!* All I have to say is, that the

use of such a phrase shows a want of poetic sensibility to diction. And then again, riding men for cavalry — and arms on foot for infantry — can anything be clumsier?

B. Certainly, after the vivid abruptness of the Italian, this passage does drag shamblingly along in German; but can you do it any better in English?

M. Better, but certainly not well —

> "The lightning of the maniples,
> The surging of the horses;"

or perhaps better, though not so verbally literal — The lightning of the squadrons.

B. But if there be such loss in a translation from Manzoni by Goethe, what must be the loss which Shakespeare would suffer at an inferior hand?

M. Ay, and there is that other essential element which still remains, and cannot be transported into another language — the rhythm. Nothing in Shakespeare is more wonderful than his rhythmic power. It is as various as the subject he touches. It has no trick that can be caught. The passion of the moment sways the expression to its own. It is infinite in its variety. In his Art language is fluid, and flows easily into every mould. All other poets can be imitated, but he is inimitable. We always speak of Shakespeare as if he had never changed and developed in his style and modes of conception. But he had as various manners as the

great painters, and his early plays are quite different from his later ones, which are larger and broader in style, and with a freer and grander method. He began with poems and sonnets, which he wrought out with great care, and it was a long time before he discarded these measures utterly. In all his early plays you have rhymed couplets and quatrains with comparatively little cadence other than that appropriate to poems. Line follows line with equal balance, and many passages in themselves are little poems. For instance, take the "Two Gentlemen of Verona": —

> "Thus have I shunned the fire for fear of burning,
> And drenched me in the sea where I am drowned;
> I feared to show my father Julia's letter,
> Lest he should take exceptions to my love.
> And with the vantage of my own excuse
> Hath he excepted most against my love.
> Oh! how this spring of love resembleth
> The uncertain glory of an April day,
> Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
> And by and by a cloud takes all away."

Here you have a series of modulated lines, with the endings all balanced — with little variety of cæsura, and at last breaking into rhyme. All is in the sonnet rhythm as Shakespeare had been accustomed to use it. Or take another passage: —

> "Even as one heat another heat expels,
> Or as one nail by strength drives out another,
> So the remembrance of my former love
> Is by a newer object quite forgotten.
> Is it her mien or Valentinus' praise,
> Her sure perfection or my late transgression,

That makes me reasonless to reason thus?
She 's fair — and so is Julia that I love, —
That I did love — for now my love is thawed,
Which like a waxen image 'gainst a fire,
Bears no impression of the thing it was."

Here in like manner we have the sonnet. I am not now speaking of anything but the rhythmical forms, remember.

So in "Love's Labor Lost," the same sonnet-strain of rhythm is visible throughout. Blank verse constantly breaks into rhyme, and actual sonnets are interspersed, as if Shakespeare could not forego this form of verse. In these early plays another characteristic feature of the sonnets constantly appears, and this is the reduplication and repetition of the same words, and the same sound, as well as a great love of alliteration, both initial and on the final syllable. Thus, for instance, where Biron says: —

"Why, all delights are vain; and that most vain
Which with pain purchased doth inherit pain,
As painfully to pore upon a book
To seek the light of truth, while truth the while
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look,
Light seeking light doth light of light beguile."

And so on. Compare this with one of his sonnets, and you will see the same peculiarity. Thus in this beautiful sonnet: —

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediment. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove."

Or, —

"Take all my loves, my love; yea, take them all,
What hast thou then more than thou had'st afore?
No love, my love, that thou may'st true love call,
All mine was thine afore thou had'st this more."

The same manner still clings to him in "Romeo and Juliet," though it in parts begins to assume a new form, and you remember enough to feel this without my boring you with quotations. Please, however, recall and compare these two passages: —

"Oh! she doth teach the torches to burn bright:
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear —
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear."

And this from the sonnets: —

"Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night hideous and her old face new."

This is his first style, or manner. Gradually he broke free from this — gave freer rein to his verse, and entirely changed its modulation. Line does not follow line, and there are far fewer balanced verses — in fact, almost none. The lines are broken, and run over their boundaries. The cæsuras are varied, and the sentences stop midway of the line. Thus: —

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness, and the night,
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica: look, how the floor of heaven

Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There 's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims."

Here, you have his second manner. The first six lines are completely broken, and we hear a new movement, freer, larger, and more dramatic; while the latter three lines still retain a little of the older character, not yet quite discarded, but coming in after the others like a strain of sweetness. I have cited expressly this passage, because it shows the process of transformation in his style. Few passages in the whole play are so broken as the first six, and these indicate the style he is assuming. For the most part in this play, though the rhythm is much varied, there is nothing like abruptness; all, on the contrary, is peculiarly flowing and harmonious, though differing in character from the earlier plays. Here, constantly, we feel the rhythmic influence of Marlowe. It is really difficult to fix the mind on the form and construction of the verse, the poetry so carries one away. Listen: —

"Your mind is tossing on the ocean.
There, where your argosies, with portly sail,
Like signors, or rich burghers of the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them on their woven wings."

And again: —

"Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,

And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing, bechanced, would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know Antonio
Is sad — to think upon his merchandise."

This, then, is his second manner. But when we come to his last manner, all is changed. In "Lear," in "Antony and Cleopatra," in "The Tempest," there is no longer balance of lines and of phrases, recurrent movements of rhythm, or flowing verses. On the contrary, the lines are for the most part broken; the cadences are independent of lines; the cæsuras are varied; melody has given way to harmony; sweetness and smoothness have been rejected for abruptness and strength; a new dramatic purpose is here felt, and a more powerful dramatic diction and form. Sometimes the phrases are short and abrupt; sometimes they rise like great waves overflowing their shored margins, and sweeping resistlessly on to the close. We have no longer the early polished, and, so to speak, self-conscious, versification. Take, for instance, this from "Antony and Cleopatra": —

"Noblest of men — woo't die?
Hast thou no care of me? Shall I abide
In this dull world, which, in thy absence, is
No better than a stye? Oh, see, my women,
The crown o' the earth doth melt: — my lord! —
Oh, withered is the garland of the war, —

The soldier's pole is fallen; young boys and girls
Are level now with men: the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon."

Think how different this is in rhythm from —

"But soft: what light from yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious morn,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she."

And this is not his very earliest manner; but what a difference! Or take a passage from "Lear:" —

"Howl, howl, howl, howl — oh, you are men of stones.
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault would crack. She 's gone forever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives.
She 's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass.
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then, she lives."

Or —

"Pray, do not mock me.
I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Fourscore and upwards — not an hour more or less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."

Or let us take "The Tempest." Look at the construction of such passages as these: —

"Admired Miranda!
Indeed the top of admiration — worth
What 's dearest in the world! Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard; and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear. For several virtues
Have I liked several women — never any
With so full soul, but some defect in her

Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed,
And put it to the foil: but you — oh you,
So perfect, so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best."

Or this speech of Prospero: —

"I have bedimmed
The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
Have I made shake; and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar; graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers; oped, and let them forth,
By my so potent art."

And again, in the same speech, a beautiful growing rhythm, and exquisitely fitted to the thought and image expressed: —

"The charm dissolves apace,
And as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness; so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason."

B. One seems to feel the morning gradually growing over the world in this serene rhythm. What a contrast to the passage immediately preceding! Go on, and cite me something else, in proof of your assertion. Give me something from "Othello."

M. When one begins to repeat passages from Shakespeare, there is no end to it. But here is one that seems to me for rhythm perfect. I never tire of saying it over. It strengthens and fills my whole sense with its harmony; it is so grand, so

massive, so intense, that it lifts one up and bears him on as a mighty wave. Listen, and feel every word of it, not only for its meaning, but for its sound and rhythm. See how fine is the very first break: —

> "Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
> To the Propontic, and the Hellespont;
> Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
> Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
> Till that a capable and wide revenge
> Swallow them up."

B. What a magnificent passage! The passage seems suddenly to be swept over into a whirlpool on that last sudden reverse of the rhythm — "Swallow them up." Mark, too, the wonderful perfection of the epithets, the strong alliteration, not only of letters, but of sounds; the Propontic and the Hellespont; the assonance of "feels" and "keeps," "capable and wide revenge;" the very words seem to gape over the abyss that swallows them up.

M. Ah! I knew you would feel that. Listen to one more, and I am done. It is in "Measure for Measure." I do not believe the English language, or any language, could do more than is done in this passage. It is where Isabella is persuading Claudio to die: —

> "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
> This sensible, warm motion to become

A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling! — 't is too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death."

B. What variety of pause and flow! Here is no measured, mechanical trick of versification, but a grand and mighty movement of harmony. "To reside in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice" gives one a chill to the marrow of one's bones, — the ice-blocks hustle and mass against each other in the verse. Again, what loose libration and whirl in that wonderful rhythmic form of "Blown with restless violence round about the pendent world"! Here is no counting of feet on one's fingers. Then, too, observe how the cæsura is varied. Yes, it is a wonderful passage.

M. One might go on forever, but we had better stop. After this, I doubt whether we could find anything better. Suppose you translate it into German, and see what you can retain. I am quite sure no one could translate it without terrible loss.

B. Shakespeare is the most impersonal of all writers. He never obtrudes himself; nay, he almost never allows you to catch a glimpse of him.

His characters all stand for themselves, and speak and think for themselves. He has no favorites. To him it was all one whether it was Bottom or Othello, Beatrice or Lady Macbeth, Pistol or Lear. He draws them with the certainty of life and nature, and he leaves them without the least shadow of commendation or condemnation. There they are. There is no touch of sympathy for Othello, or of reprobation for Iago. We do not hear the trick of his voice or gesture, nor catch him peeping through the wires. He is as perfectly impersonal as a mirror held up to nature.

> "He nor commends nor grieves,
> Pleads for itself the fact,
> As unrelenting Nature leaves
> Her every act."

Yet here and there one seems to catch a personality, and this last citation brings one to my mind. There is always a certain insistence in the delight of mere living, and a certain horror of death, which seems to me to show that to him life was a great joy, and death to his active nature had a peculiar repulsion. One sees this constantly in Hamlet, which is, perhaps, the least impersonal of all the characters he ever drew, and represents a mood which comes to all imaginative natures at a certain period of life, and through which he was passing when he wrote this play. The sphinx riddle of humanity, and of life and death, was then troubling his reason and his consciousness, and so weighing upon him that it gives a color to all the

meditations of Hamlet that is doubtless completely true to Hamlet dramatically, but that has a certain somewhat beyond the dramatical truth and of a personal character. I cannot exactly explain why this is, but I cannot help feeling it. The famous soliloquy, "To be, or not to be," for instance, has the accent of Shakespeare in it, — a certain overplus of weight coming from his own feeling. There is nothing like this in "Lear," in "Othello," in "Macbeth," or, in fact, in any of the other plays.

M. Yes, I quite understand what you mean, and I agree to it. The key of all the character of Hamlet is self-introversion, and interior questioning, and metaphysical hesitation. Hamlet is not, as is usually supposed, wanting in decision of character, or incapable, as Goethe seems to think, of action. In all matters which do not involve metaphysical and philosophic reasoning, on which he cannot make up his mind, he is prompt and decisive of action. He does not hesitate an instant in all his course with regard to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, but on the contrary promptly executes his plans. Once he is sure of his grounds — once his course is clear — he hesitates no longer. And this distinction Shakespeare, as I read him, meant plainly to show. Hamlet's scruples, and questions, and hesitations are all in respect to questions which are doubtful, and in regard to which he cannot persuade himself. As soon as the question is clearly settled, he acts not only

with decision, but even with violence. In the case of the king, there are many reasons which make him doubt and pause in his revenge. First and foremost, the question whether he is not wrong in his suspicions of guilt; second, consideration for his mother; third, natural scruples of conscience, and an unwillingness to kill his uncle — his father's brother, his mother's husband — unless he sees it to be his plain duty. With Polonius he has no such drawbacks, — he kills him at once; and when clearly assured of the king's guilt, he is instant at last with his vengeance. He is a scholar and a thinker, but he is also a soldier.

B. What do you think of Goethe's critique of Hamlet, in "Wilhelm Meister"?

M. It seems to me to be boring and mechanical. He sets to work in the true German fashion to investigate all incidental traces of his character, all previous events of his life, and wishes really to go back to his boyhood, even to his infancy. He lays his character all out as on the squares of a chessboard, and then seeks to play it, as by a series of deliberate moves. He seems to be endeavoring to reduce everything to a sort of mechanical exactness. He says that Shakespeare's characters "act as if they were watches, whose dial-plates and cases were of crystal, which pointed out according to their use the course of the hours and minutes, while at the same time you can discern the combinations of wheels and springs that turn them."

B. That is, I confess, an unfortunate illustra-

tion! Can there be anything more unlike Shakespeare than this?

M. Well, to go on. He says the key of Hamlet's whole procedure is to be found in the words, —

> "The time is out of joint — oh, cursed spite,
> That I was ever born to set it right," —

and then proceeds to argue that Shakespeare meant "to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it, and that in this view the whole play is composed. "There is," he says, "an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom: the roots expand; the jar is shivered; a lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve that forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear, and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him; the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him," etc. Now all this seems a very inadequate and partial account of Hamlet. It makes of him a weak-minded youth who had a definite and undoubted duty to do, and wanted energy of mind and purpose to do it. But is this an account of Hamlet? Was he an oak-tree planted in a jar, — a poor, weak, nerveless nature sinking under a burden too strong to bear? No! no! no! and a thousand times no! And then, think of the neat, pretty little plot which Goethe would substitute for that of Shakespeare! He proposes to cut out entirely the disturbances in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, and

young Fortinbras himself and the embassy to his uncle; and Horatio's return to Wittenberg; and Laertes' journey to France; and Hamlet's journey to England, and his capture, and the death of the two courtiers, — all of which, he says, are fit for expanding and lengthening a novel, but here injure exceedingly the unity of the piece, and are only "weak and slender threads that run through the play." Having disposed of these, he substitutes a cut-and-dried plot of his own; gets rid of Wittenberg and the university, which he says is "a sorry piece of business;" and makes Horatio into the great personage and the future king; and in fact treats the whole play after the reckless and prosaic method of one of the old playwrights of the last century.

B. But to go back to what I was saying: death, and the removal from this active, joyous, pulsing life, seems always to have had a peculiar repulsion to Shakespeare. Everywhere you seem to feel this, more or less sensibly. Remember that wonderful description of Cardinal Beaufort's death, of Gloster's corpse, the death of King John, — the very passage from "Measure for Measure" which you just cited, — the scenes in "Macbeth," and the soliloquies of Hamlet.

M. Nothing certainly could more powerfully exhibit this feeling than the pleading of Claudio; and I confess your reasoning makes an impression on me.

B. It is the common belief that the poetical

faculty declines with age. But this was not so with Shakespeare. His last works are his greatest, — greatest not only in art, but in pathos, in power, and in passion. "Othello" and "Lear" were among his latest plays, and they are certainly among his greatest. "Romeo and Juliet" beside them, charming and impassioned as it is, is comparatively feeble. He finally achieved with a touch what he previously elaborated. The death of Cordelia has a tenderness, simplicity, and pathos beyond anything to be found in his early plays; and for power and passion, Lear, in the storm, is unequaled. As for "Othello," the passion sweeps through the latter scenes like a simoom. It is the terrible fury of the east, — overwhelming everything before it, like the sand-blast of the desert. Shakespeare's powers were at his highest when he died.

M. There is the same difference between human beings as between plants. Some come to their complete growth and fruit early, and afterwards develop no more. Some grow steadily and slowly, like the oak, and never cease to grow. But great natures do not die out early. Youth brings its blossoms, and mature manhood ripens them to fruit. In them, enthusiasm does not fade with the passage of years, while art increases. Their powers enlarge; they gain more command over them, and the product of their genius is richer and larger. Old Chaucer was in spirit a youth when he died; and he did not write his "Canter-

bury Tales" till he was sixty years old, if I recollect right.

B. How delightful they are! how full of morning freshness, and natural charm, and sweet irony! His descriptions of nature are enchanting, his pathos exquisite. What tender touches of sentiment! what trenchant portraiture! Every person in that happy Pilgrimage is a living character, touched with a spirit and slyness and individuality that are amazing. There are passages in him which are like nature itself. He never grew old, but ripened with every day, like a sound, fresh apple, into the late autumn of his life.

M. He was, as old Deacon B. used to say, when he recommended his apples, a "good-keeping fruit. 'T ain't too sweet, and it ain't too sour. It 's a good eating apple, and a good keeping apple. 'T ain't like some of them fruits that 's early ripe and early rotten. It 'll stand by you the whole winter, and be just as good next spring as it is now."

B. Well, I 'm getting on to the autumn myself, and I find Chaucer keeps uncommonly well, — a good deal better than Byron. He was one of the bitter-sweets, — a sort of medlar.

M. Yes; what we used to call a frozen thaw, that had a ripe, sweet sort of rottenness; and we used to pluck them from the stunted trees in autumn when we were boys; and jolly days they were, too. And the frozen thaws then tasted delicious. But they did n't keep; and I don't think I should like them now.

B. One's tastes change. I can remember when nothing seemed so magnificent as Byron, and when Goldsmith was flat to my taste as stale beer; and I used to laugh when my father quoted him, and advised me to read his "Traveller" and his "Deserted Village." I tried them, I remember, several times, but I gave it up — then. Now I can relish his natural and happy touches.

M. No; he is not a boy's poet. But in his way he is delightful. His plane is low, but he never attempts flights beyond his powers, and does not swell into bombast and exaggeration.

B. Well, that is at least something, in these days of artificiality and pretension.

M. Don't begin to abuse to-day. It's a poor thing, perhaps, as Audrey says, but our own, and it is useless to kick against it. But to revert to what we were saying. Poetry is undoubtedly early developed in the true poet; and many of the most beautiful poems we possess were written when the authors were young. But it does not follow that the poetic faculty becomes dimmed by age. On the contrary, some of the greatest poems that exist were written at least in the ripeness of manhood, and some even in comparatively old age. And of the great names, there are few, if any, who lost their early power, and wrote worse as life advanced. There is Chaucer, whom we have already mentioned, who began at sixty his "Canterbury Tales." Milton's "Paradise Lost" was written when he was nearly sixty, and "Samson Ago-

nistes" some four or five years later. Dante's great Vision was the product of his maturity, and throws all his early efforts into shade. Spenser's "Faery Queen" was his last work; and he was engaged on it when he died, at forty-six. Homer was an old man when he wrote the "Iliad." The greatest of Shakespeare's plays were his last. Sophocles was nearly ninety when he was summoned before the Phratores, on the charge that his powers of intellect had decayed, and his answer was, to read the "Œdipus at Colonus," which he had just composed. Euripides, at seventy-three, wrote his "Orestes." Æschylus was fifty-three when he gained the prize at Athens for his great trilogy of the "Oresteia." The last work of Virgil was his "Æneid," which he did not begin till he was, at least, forty-three years of age. Simonides, the great lyric poet, in his eightieth year gained the crown of victory over all competitors with his "Dithyrambic Chorus," which was the fifty-sixth prize he had carried off. The famous lyric poet, Stesichorus, wrote without failing powers till he was eighty; and so did Pindar till past that age. These are great constellations in the sky that time has not obscured. Each steadily brightened as he went on his course. Their imaginative powers, so far from failing as age crept upon them, grew fuller and stronger, and their later works surpassed their earlier ones. With such examples, one cannot admit that age chills the current of poetic flow.

B. But let us come down to later times. In

Italy, for instance, we have Petrarca, who died at seventy, and whose life was given to literature and poetry, even to its very last moment, and who was found sitting in his library, and leaning over an open book, as if he were reading, but in reality dead. Nor did his poetic powers fail with age; and among his best poems is the very last canzone, to the "Bella Vergine." So, too, there is Metastasio, who lived and wrote until he was eighty-four; and Goldoni, who died at eighty-seven, and wrote after he had passed his fourscore years some of his happiest plays; and Bojardo, whose "Orlando Inamorato" was written when he was past fifty; and Boccaccio, fresh as ever when he died at sixty-two. To take a leap to our own times, we have Wordsworth, whose best poems were written in the full plenitude of his manhood. He was from forty-six to fifty when he wrote his "Laodamia," "White Doe of Rylstone," "Ode to Lycoris and Dion." Still later was his famous "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality;" and he lived to eighty, with unfailing poetic power. Heine, too, old and bedridden, wrote some of his most pathetic as well as amusing poems. Molière wrote his most famous plays at the end of his life, when he was between forty-five and fifty; and Dryden was past seventy when he wrote his "Ode to St. Cecilia," which is perhaps the most imaginative flight of his Muse. Let me also add Goethe to the list, — though, perhaps, you won't agree. All his great plays were written when he was well on in life;

and it is, after all, a grand spectacle to see him, down to the day of his death at eighty-three, laboring on with an almost youthful zeal, and with an unabated devotion to literature.

M. True, it is. Do not think I do not admire him, despite his shortcomings. He was a great literary worker, and a grand figure in his century. He gave his whole life with a noble steadiness to his work, not dawdling over it, nor toying with it at casual hours, but laboring with a sincerity and honesty of purpose which demands our admiration; *ohne Hast, aber ohne Rast* — to use his own words — he worked to the end. But some of those you have mentioned were mere youths compared with many on the list of the old Greeks that is given by Lucian, in his essay entitled Μακροβίοι, in which he enumerates the ages of many of the more celebrated men of antiquity.

B. Pray read me some of them, if you have the book here.

M. With pleasure. In the first place, he speaks of those kings who have attained a great age. Among these is Arganthonius (*Rex Tartessiorum*), who is said to have lived one hundred and fifty years; so at least it is stated by Herodotus and Anacreon, but to Lucian this seems to partake of the fabulous. Cicero only gives him one hundred and twenty years. Then there is Agathocles, tyrant of Sicily, who died at ninety-five, according to Democharis and Timæus; Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, who died at ninety-two, Antæus, king of the

Scythians, who lived more than ninety years; Bardyllis, king of Illyria, who fought on horseback, in the war against Philip, when he was ninety; Ptolemy Lagus and Mithridates, both of whom lived till they were eighty-four; Cyrus, king of the Persians, who, when he was one hundred years old, committed suicide, and this fact seems to be well authenticated; one Artaxerxes, who died at eighty-six, or, according to other accounts, at ninety-four; and the other Artaxerxes, who, according to Isidorus, the historian, lived ninety-three years; Masinissa, the king of the Moors, who lived ninety years; Asander, who at ninety was still an admirable horseman and active soldier, and starved himself to death at ninety-three; and Godesius, who, according to Isidorus, lived one hundred and fifteen years.

Of philosophers and cultivators of letters, Lucian enumerates Democritus, who lived one hundred and eight years, and then committed suicide by abstaining from food; Zenophilus (the musician and philosopher), who died at one hundred and five years of age; Solon, Pittacus, and Thales, three of the seven wise men of Greece, who each lived one hundred years; Zeno, the chief of the Stoics, who lived to ninety-eight years, and then, when on his way to the assembly, fell, and rising, exclaimed to the earth, "Why do you call me?" and returning home, refused food and died; Cleanthes, his disciple and successor, who also starved himself to death at the age of ninety-nine; Xeno-

crates, the disciple of Plato, who lived eighty-two years; Xenophanes, who wrote his famous elegy at ninety-two; Carneades, the chief of the new academy, who died at eighty-five; Diogenes, also, at eighty-eight; Plato, at eighty-one; Posidonius, the philosopher and historian, at eighty-four; Critolaus Peripateticus, at eighty-two; Xenophon at over ninety.

Of historians he notes, among others, Ctesibius, who, according to Apollodorus, lived one hundred and twenty-four years; Hieronymus, who, despite all his labors, and his wounds received in battle, lived to one hundred and four, without any loss of his faculties; Timæus, who lived to ninety-six; Aristobulus, to over ninety, and began his history, as he himself relates in the beginning of his work, at eighty-four; and Hypsicrates, who lived to ninety-two.

Of orators, he notes Gorgias, the sophist, who lived one hundred and eight years, and then ended by starving himself to death; Isocrates, who at ninety-six years wrote his Panegyric oration, and lived to more than one hundred.

Of poets, he cites Sophocles, who at ninety-five years of age was choked by a grape-stone; (Valerius Maximus, however, says that he wrote his "Œdipus at Colonus" when he was one hundred, but in this he is not borne out by authority) Cratinus, who died at ninety; Philemon, who died of a fit of laughter, at ninety-seven, at seeing an ape eating figs; and Epicharmus, also at the same age.

Anacreon lived to eighty-five, Stersichorus to the same age, and Simonides to over ninety.

According to the statements contained in the letter to Polycles prefixed to the "Characters" of Theophrastus, he composed that work in his ninety-ninth year; and according to Hieronymus ("Epist. ad Nepot.") and Lucian, he died at one hundred and seven.

Hippocrates' age is stated differently by different authors, at eighty-five, ninety, one hundred and four, and one hundred and nine. On the whole, it would seem that he lived till beyond one hundred. Democritus is said to have lived to one hundred and eight; Hieronymus, the Rhodian, to one hundred and four; Galen to one hundred; and Demonous to one hundred, when he starved himself to death. So much for the longevity of the Greeks.

Among the Romans, also, there were many who arrived at a great age. Juvenal, it is said, died at one hundred; Varro at eighty-nine. Fabius Maximus, after being augur for sixty-two years, died a centenarian. Perennius Tulius died at one hundred and eleven; Terentia, the wife of Cicero, according to some at one hundred and three, according to others at one hundred and twelve. Galeria exercised her profession of charlatan up to a hundred years; Lucia, the comic actress, according to Pliny, acted on the stage when she was one hundred. Claudia, the wife of the senator Aurelius, died at one hundred and fifteen; and Martial has

an epitaph on a woman who, according to him, died at two hundred years of age.

"Masinissa," says Cato in Cicero's essay "De Amicitia," "although he is now ninety years of age, takes long journeys, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, without once relieving himself throughout the whole way, by alternately changing from one mode of traveling to another. He is so excessively hardy that no severity of weather when he is abroad can induce him to cover his head; and having by these means preserved a spare and active habit of body, he still retains sufficient strength and spirits to discharge in person the several functions of his royal station."

Flegon, in his treatise "De Longævis," cites the names of one hundred and seventeen centenarians in the Roman Empire; and when Vespasian, in the year 74 of our era, made his census, in the eighth circumscription, there were fifty-nine persons who were one hundred years old; one hundred and fourteen who were from one hundred to one hundred and ten; two from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty-five; four from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and thirty; six from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and thirty-five; three from one hundred and thirty-five to one hundred and forty.

Nor in later times have we fallen below these figures, extraordinary as they seem. On the 28th of October, 1779, the patriarch Jacob entered the French assembly, on which all the members arose

to salute this man, whose number of years was one hundred and twenty; and on the tenth anniversary of the taking of the Bastile, on the 14th of July, 1799, the First Consul received two Invalides, one of one hundred and six, and the other of one hundred and seven years. In 1805, at the age of one hundred and seventeen years, died Doctor Beaupin, whose vigor of constitution seems almost incredible. He was, it is stated, married for the second time at eighty years of age, and from this marriage had no less than sixteen children, as many as he had had by his previous marriage. In 1810, Doctor Dufournet also married at the age of eighty, and lived till he was one hundred and twenty. In 1822, Pietro Huet assisted at the inauguration of the statue of Louis XIV.; he was then one hundred and seventeen years of age, the doyen of the French army, and the only living man in all France who had seen "Le Grand Monarque." In 1878, Mirrault, the diplomat, died, at over one hundred years. He had fought in America, under Lafayette and Rochambeau. I shall finish this list of French centenarians with Monsieur Duroy, who at one hundred and four years, on the occasion of the marriage of two of his great-grandchildren, danced and sang at the wedding.

B. How amazingly young all this makes one feel! Why, my dear fellow, we have not yet begun life. Let me hear more of these youths of one hundred.

M. We are not behind them in England. Ba-

con cites the cases of persons of one hundred and fifty and one hundred and sixty years, and asserts that these ages are established by perfectly satisfactory evidence. Then, again, there is the Parr family, whose names and ages are so well known. There was Thomas, who lived one hundred and fifty-two years, and left three grandsons, who died, one at one hundred and twenty-three, one at one hundred and twenty-four, one at one hundred and twenty-five, and their father at one hundred and fifty. In 1770, William Parr, the last of the family, died at one hundred and twenty, having seen the death during his lifetime of no less than one hundred and forty-four descendants. Then there was Henry Jenkins, who died at the age of one hundred and fifty-two. According to Bourdon, there were at Greenwich Hospital, in the year 1806, no less than one hundred and twenty centenarians, thirteen of whom were celibate.

B. Basta! that is enough. I don't believe one word of it all. Such accounts must be taken with many grains of salt.

M. I vouch for nothing. I simply repeat what I read. But let me go on with my record. General Wilcocks, in his "Insurance Guide and Handbook," which you must accept as a work of great authority, makes the following statement in regard to longevity: "Notwithstanding what has already been said, it would seem that, of the two extremes, cold is more favorable to long life than extreme heat. Sir Henry Halford was informed

by the Russian minister, Baron Brunow, that there was a level country of about one hundred square leagues, sloping to the south, on the borders of Siberia, where a year rarely passed in the course of which some person did not die at the age of one hundred and thirty. The question was asked, of course, Can you depend upon your registrars there? To which the reply was, Anybody who knows the practice of the Greek Church will tell you that the bishops are more careful of their registration, if possible, than your parochial clergy are in Great Britain." "In the year 1835, there died in the Russian Empire four hundred and sixteen persons of one hundred years and upwards. The oldest was one hundred and thirty-five. There were one hundred and eleven above one hundred and ten; and from official accounts of deaths in the same Empire in 1839, it appears that there were eight hundred and fifty-eight whose ages ranged from one hundred to one hundred and five; one hundred and twenty-six from one hundred and ten to one hundred and fifteen; one hundred and thirty from one hundred and fifteen to one hundred and twenty; three from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty; one at one hundred and forty-five; three from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and fifty-six; one at one hundred and sixty; and one at one hundred and sixty-four. At Dantzic, one was said to have lived to one hundred and eighty-four, and still one at Wallachia, in 1840, died at one hundred and eighty-four."

Dr. Fitch, in his well-known treatise on Consumption, gives the following cases of longevity in the United States. Henry Francisco died at White Hall, New York, aged one hundred and thirty-four; John Hightower died in Marengo County, Alabama, in 1845, at one hundred and thirty-four; others at one hundred and eleven, one hundred and twenty-three, one hundred and thirty-six, one hundred and seventeen, one hundred and twenty, one hundred and twenty-two.

B. And have you ever known any centenarian?

M. Undoubtedly; for whom do you take me? As a boy, I used to see every Sunday at church the venerable Doctor Holyoke, who, being only one hundred, and a little deaf, used to sit in the pulpit with the Reverend Doctor Brazer; and a few years ago, at the Shaker community, I had the pleasure of an interview with a nice old lady of only one hundred and three, who seemed to me to be quite as young as the dame in whose charge she was. Indeed, when I knocked at the door of her house, and a seemingly very old lady presented herself, I ventured to ask if I had the pleasure of seeing Sister ——; to which she indignantly responded: "Nothing of the kind; I take charge of Sister ——." "Can I have the pleasure of seeing her?" I asked. "Why not?" said she. "I don't see any reason." "And where is she?" I asked. "Well, she 's in her room, I guess." "And shall I go up to see her?" "Bless your soul," she exclaimed, "no!" as if this were a gross impropriety.

"She 'll come down and see you." So in a shrill voice she called out, "I say, Sister ——, here 's a gentleman who wants to see you;" and a moment after appeared the old lady, and came pretty briskly down a flight of stairs almost as steep as a ladder; she shook hands warmly with and seemed delighted to see me; and told me about the old days, which were the freshest of all in her mind; she said that she had been born in the vicinity, and brought to the colony of Shakers when she was three years old, at which time she was entered on their books; so that there could be no mistake about her age. And all this her attendant confirmed, and said, "That 's a fact, as you can see if you want to."

B. And what has become of her since, and when was it you saw her?

M. It was in 1882, and for all I know she may be living still. She seemed hale and hearty enough, and during all my interview with her she refused to sit down; she stood and held my hand, and seemed greatly pleased to see me and to talk about "good old colony times, when we lived under a king."

B. Old age is very interesting in others, but not in ourselves.

M. Do you remember well Cicero's essay "De Senectute"? I have been lately reading it over again, and it somewhat disappointed me, though there are noble and stately passages, such as can be written only in Latin. But setting aside himself, his list of grand old men is a noble and inspiring one.

B. Pray let me hear it, if you can remember it. It is so very long since I read the "De Senectute" that I have quite forgotten all the particulars, and remember only the general drift, and here and there a passage.

M. I only meant that the instances he mentions of certain noble old men delighted me. He speaks of Quintus Fabius Maximus, for example — the famous "Fabius qui cunctando restituit rem," — as a most delightful man in his old age, possessed of an iron memory, in which the "battles, fortunes, sieges, he had passed" (and he uses almost exactly these words), were deeply engraved, but which was enriched with a thorough knowledge of history and literature as well as of the law of augury, so that in the peace of his old age his conversation was as charming as it was instructive. And he says that for a life that has been spent in tranquillity, purity, and refinement there is reserved a gentle and undisturbed old age, such as we have heard that of Plato to have been, who died while composing; such as was that of Isocrates, who wrote his "Panathenaicum" in his ninety-fourth year, and he lived five years after; or that of his master, Gorgias of Leontium, the celebrated sophist and rhetorician, who lived to one hundred and seven years of age, and never discontinued his studies and occupations, and who, when he was asked why he was content to live so long, answered, "I have no charge to bring against old age." And then afterwards he enumerates among the band of grand old men the

names of Sophocles, Homer, Hesiod, Stesichorus, Pythagoras, Solon, Democritus, Plato, Xenocrates, Cyrus the elder, Zeno, Cleanthes, and Diogenes the Stoic, Licinius Crassus, and Cethegus, called by Ennius the marrow of conversation, all deepening in their learning, and sweetening in their natures, as they grew old, and never ceasing the rigorous prosecution of their studies as long as breath remained, but still enjoying life, and enriching the world by their knowledge and experience. It is Marcus Cato, then eighty-four years old, into whose mouth Cicero put these praises of age; and to this list he adds M. Valerius Corvus, who lived to one hundred years, full of honors, and the end of whose life was more fortunate than even his middle age, for it was attended with more consideration and less labor; and also L. Cæcilius Metellus, of whom it was inscribed on his tomb, "Very many nations agree that he was the foremost man of his nation." These are the names, or at least the chief of the names, he mentions.

B. It is a grand list, and I doubt if we could make as noble a one of the youths of celebrity. But I must add one or two of later times, out of the painters and sculptors: Titian, whose pencil dropped from his hand only when he was stricken by the plague at nearly one hundred years of age; Michel Angelo, whose fervid brain carried him on with ever fresh creative power and imaginative capacity to ninety; Leonardo da Vinci, master of all arts and sciences, the fullest and ablest man in all

directions perhaps that ever lived, and who died at his easel, with undiminished faculties, at seventy-five; Tintoretto, whose unwearied pencil worked until he was eighty-two; Palma Giovine, who lived and exercised his art until he was eighty-four; Perugino, whose skill had not fallen at seventy-eight; Rubens, who was as irrepressible as ever at seventy; Teniers, who elaborated his groups and interiors till he was eighty-four; and Claude, whose pictures were still as charming as ever when he died at eighty-two. And I will add one more, and that is Mantegna, who labored at his easel till he was seventy-five. I consider that a good list of youths.

M. It is, and it might be greatly enlarged, but "it will do," as Mercutio has it. I shall, however, take the liberty of adding one more out of our own day and my own country: Josiah Quincy, the veteran statesman, who died a few years since at the age of ninety-five. A grand, heroic character of the ancient type, whose courage was as great as his patriotism was pure; who kept the enthusiasm of his youth and his faith in the future to the last; who was no sad praiser of the past, no "laudator temporis acti me puero," but who breathed encouragement to all with his words, and animated youth by his counsel, and never despaired when clouds gathered around the State.

B. I knew him well, and all you say of him is just; his uncorrupted and incorruptible principles, his true honesty, his large and liberal sentiments,

and his fresh-heartedness made him dear and honored by all men. I would we had many such in the councils of the nation.

M. A serene old age like that has a special charm. When the agitations and passions of youth are past, and worldly ambitions have ceased to urge us on to new strifes, it must be pleasant to look down, as it were, from the eminence of age upon the battle on the field below, and to cast one's eye peacefully over the long retrospect of the past when life has been noble in itself, and unstained. It should be so. Such an old age should be

"Serene and bright, and lovely as a Lapland night."[1]

B. Doubtless there are such, and let us hope they are not rare. But it is unpleasant to think, after all one's activity, that one at last may be laid on the shelf a useless incumbrance, or worse.

M. There is no thought more terrible than that of surviving one's self, — of expiring "a driveler and a show," as Johnson says of Swift; of being a horror to one's friends; of falling into one's dotage, as Marlborough did after all his splendid achievements.

B. Fearful! Let us pray that such a fate may

[1] There is still another most venerable figure which rises before me now that I re-read after many years these Conversations, that of George Bancroft, the distinguished historian, who is still living and strong in this year; and still another, — that of Sidney Bartlett, who, at ninety, the other day made as powerful an argument in court as he ever did in his ablest days — and this is saying a great deal. Alas! even as I write these last words comes the sad news of his death.

never overtake us. Nor is it quite agreeable to be put out to pasture like an old hunter or war-horse, and to have all the desire to join the battle or the hunt when the trumpet sounds, and yet to be unable.

M. It is worse to grow old after a life of vice and sensuality, and to feel the evil impulses still remaining when we can no longer get any pleasure from them, or when the power to gratify them is gone. Coleridge, if I rightly recollect, says something like this in his "Friend." I am not sure that I quote him correctly, but it runs, as well as I remember, "This is the penalty that habitual vice exacts of the offender, that its impulses wax as its motives wane."

B. Very true; and no one knew it better than Coleridge himself. His vice of opium-eating tormented him constantly, and drove him to most ignominious subterfuges and expedients to procure it surreptitiously; and the temptations were irresistible, overcoming all his resolutions. It is a sad spectacle to see a noble mind, so full of inspiration and genius, so winged with poesy, prostrated and groveling before a vice like this, — a vice which he hated, but could not abandon.

M. Habits are not only a second nature, as the trite saying is, but they are the trodden path of desires, worn into the nature itself, or developed by circumstances. We should be very careful to set our aspirations high, and to start our desires on a pure path, or we shall surely rue it at last.

Finally they will become our masters, leading us to pleasant pastures, or driving us into marshes of disgust and despond. Drinking runs into mania at last, and money-making is nearly as bad; it becomes a greed that vitiates all one's better tastes, absorbs one's faculties, irritates, excites, and ruins the nerves, and becomes a necessity like dram-drinking.

B. Bravo! — what a sermon! Oh, what a preacher was in Mallett lost!

M. You may laugh; but it is true. Everything nowadays is sacrificed to this greed. Love and home and peaceful delights all seem tame after the Bourse; and an old money-maker is pretty sure to be restless and unhappy, no matter what he has made.

B. Please allow some exceptions.

M. As many as you like. I only insist upon the rule. We are all creatures of habit; and for me art and literature are as necessary as air. But I am glad to say that they have led me into pleasant pastures and among running streams of delight.

B. You remember Wordsworth's lines? —

> "Ennobling thoughts depart
> When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
> The student's bower for gold."

M. Ay; and the others too, which are but too true: —

> "The world is too much with us. Late and soon
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, — a sordid boon."

And we shall reap the reward of it, — in our age, at least, if not in our youth. Literature and art are a never-dying source of delight. "Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur."

B. Go on.

M. I should like to repeat the whole oration if I could. I suppose Hortensius could have repeated all after hearing it once, and Macaulay, I doubt not, would have done the same; but I have but a sieve of a memory that lets everything through. It is a noble defense of letters; and I am glad that even one passage remains in my memory, though I wish the whole of it did.

B. It would be a charming power to be able to carry one's library in one's mind! I envy men with large memories. Still, nothing is utterly lost; and I comfort myself with thinking that even what has flowed away has at least lent its color to my thoughts, and deepened the channel through which it passed. I hope so, at least. That is the kind of riches I envy. What one is within, and what one has educated himself to do, and think, and feel, that is truly his, and no one can take it from him. Nor can he himself lose it, or willfully throw it away. But wealth and goods are not ours. They do not really belong to us,

but may be added to, or taken away, and leave us what we were. They may be squandered, or stolen, or lost. But one's mind and one's memory cannot be pilfered, like a chest of coin. What we possess in our mind is ours forever till the mind itself decays, and nothing is truly ours which we must leave behind.

M. The struggle of the world, the decreased value of money, the crowding of professions and trades at the present day, the strenuous competition for place and wealth, create specialties; and few men now are completely developed; they are rather hands, feet, head, than whole men: a general culture is rare, while a special faculty is trained to the utmost; all the professions and trades are divided and subdivided, and each man has to perfect himself in his department. There is thus a great particular gain to set off against a general loss. In art this is seen almost as much as in law; for it seems to me that culture and a large education are almost necessary to create a great artist. In the ancient days, as well as at the period of the Renaissance, the great artists were accomplished in various branches of art, and did not confine themselves to one. Phidias, for example, was a painter, an engraver, a worker in embossed figures, a sculptor in brass, gold, and ivory, and a musician, if not an architect. The architects of the Parthenon, Ictinus and Callicrates, were also sculptors of note; and indeed most of the artists of those times worked in vari-

ous branches of art. Leonardo da Vinci was as eminent an engineer as he was a painter. He was also an architect, sculptor, and musician; and besides being an author and an inventor in mechanics, he was well versed in various branches of science. Michel Angelo was a poet, sculptor, painter, and architect, and it is difficult to say in which of the last three he was greatest. Giotto was also accomplished in all these arts. Verrocchio was as excellent a sculptor as painter. Benvenuto Cellini was a soldier, a goldsmith, a sculptor, a poet, and an accomplished musician. Salvator Rosa was a painter, a poet, and a musician; and his poetry is certainly, at the least, quite as good as his pictures, while what we have of his music is of a large and admirable character. Orcagna was painter, sculptor, and architect. Ghiberti, who made the famous doors of the Florentine Baptistery, of which Michel Angelo said, with generous exaggeration, they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise, was also an architect. But, not to extend the list, in a word, nearly all the artists of any note at this period not only practiced several arts, but distinguished themselves in each; and for myself, I cannot but think that the knowledge of all made them stronger in each. They threw into everything they did the full weight of all they knew and were. The breadth of their culture gave refinement and strength to their work.

B. But how could they find time to accomplish themselves in so many arts, if one art requires a lifetime, as you say it does?

M. There is time enough to do many things, if the person is seriously concentrated in his work, and does not squander his mind and his time by half-work. Nothing is so bad as that. There are many persons who think they are working, when in truth they are only dawdling over their work, with half attention. There is time enough thrown away every day to enable any one of earnest mind to do more than many a man does with his whole day. All depends upon love of the work on which one is engaged, and in concentration of one's faculties. It is, in my opinion, better to be utterly idle, and lie fallow to influences, than to muddle away hours in half-work. Besides, change of labor is rest, and to an active mind more rest than laziness. I have always found in music a more complete refreshment of my mind, after a hard day's work in my studio, than even sleep could give. The faculties and powers and interests are thrown in a different direction, and while one series works the other reposes. After an entire change of occupation one returns with fresh zest and vigor to the work he has left; whereas, if the thoughts are constantly treading the same path, they soon, as it were, wear a rut in the mind, out of which they cannot extricate themselves, and this begets in the end mannerism and self-repetition. Still more, the various arts are but different exercises of correlative powers. They each in turn refresh and enlarge the imaginative and motive powers, and extend their sphere. Each, as it were, is echoed

and reflected into the other. The harmonies of color, and forms, and tones, and words, are closely related to each other, and but different expressions of merely the same thing. A sculptor's work will be cold if he is not sensitive to color and music; and a painter's work will be loose and vague unless his mind has been trained to the absoluteness of form and outline: neither can compose well his lines and forms unless he possess that innate sense of balance, and harmonious arrangement, and modulation, which is developed by music.

B. I dare say this is all true. A fully developed man, trained in every part of his body, will strike a harder blow than one who has trained only his arms, — however strong they may be in themselves, — for the simple reason that he can throw his whole strength and weight into it. In themselves, a blacksmith's arms ought to be stronger than those of an athlete, but his blow will not be so powerful; and I suppose it is the same with the mind as with the body. The fully developed mind will strike the hardest blows. But come, you have worked enough. Lay down your tools, and let us have a walk on the Pincio. I have spoilt more than an hour for you, — and now let us go.

M. Agreed. I have worked enough. I begin now not to see what I am doing, and I want a breath of fresh air; or will you sit down and play me something on the pianoforte? That would refresh me even more. Play me Schumann's little piece on the happy laborer returning to his home

after his day's work. That would be appropriate. And it is a bright, gay bit, full of freshness and soundness of feeling.

B. No; I will do no such thing. This is merely a device of yours to stay longer in your studio. That alone would not satisfy you, and would lead to who knows what else, and our walk would be lost. Come away. Don't say "in a few minutes," as you always do. Your few minutes are the longest I am acquainted with.

M. Yes, I know; but I hate to leave my studio so long as there is a gleam of light, — when the shadows begin to steal in and mass the parts, and the details disappear. I often find my whole day's work has been useless, — that I have been seduced by the details, which seemed charming in themselves, into a sacrifice of the great masses, to which they should be subordinated. But when the twilight comes, it is a ruthless critic, worse than the strongest sunshine.

B. Well, don't look again. And now come away!

III.

Belton. May I come in?

Mallett. Certainly. I am happy to see you.

B. Tell me frankly if I interrupt you, and I will return some other day. I am always afraid that I interfere with your work in these long sessions of mine, and that you may sometimes wish me in Jericho, rather than here, bothering you with my talk.

M. But you will not interrupt me now. So, pray, sit down.

B. How is it you can work and talk at the same time? I should think your work would require the entire concentration of your attention and faculties.

M. Ah, that depends on what I am doing. In every art there is a certain portion that is mechanical, — mere matter of elaboration after the parts are absolutely laid out and determined. And to do this, after one has learned how to do it, does not require an absolutely undivided attention. Of course, when a work is in process of creation, the whole power of the artist must be concentrated on it, and at such time he is alone with himself, whoever may be in the room; and if you interrupt him with questions, his answers will, for the most

part, be mechanical. At all events this is my case; and when messages are brought at such times, it often occurs that, though I answer them as if I understood them, they make no impression on my mind, and I remember nothing of them afterwards. I suppose it is the same with all persons deeply occupied and abstracted in their work.

B. You remind me of an old gentleman I used to know who was devoted to music, and in his latter years lost the full exercise of his faculties, and suffered shipwreck of his musical senses. He used to sit for hours at an old spinet, many of the strings of which were broken and the others out of tune, and hammer horrible jangling discords out of it, under the impression that they were charming harmonies. When the servant came to the door and announced dinner in a loud voice, he would look up from the spinet and say, "No time to attend to secular things," and then go on as if nothing else required his attention.

M. I dare say we artists often produce quite as inharmonious results while thinking we are working out some admirable design.

B. Oh, I did not mean that, — at least of you personally.

M. Still, the illustration is a good one; and it is with artists, in some portions of their work, as with an accomplished musician who can play mechanically a piece he has learned thoroughly, without abstracting himself from conversation entirely.

B. I have often wished to ask how it is that an

artist conceives a picture, statue, or poem. Does it come into his head at once complete and perfect, or does it slowly take shape? Is it willfully and purposely created or built up, or does it create itself? Does he take a subject and think it out, and reason upon it, and elaborate it, or is the process by which it is created an unconscious one?

M. I know nothing about it. Sometimes a thought or conception comes in one way, sometimes in another. Can you give any account of how an idea comes into your head, or where it came from? There is no particular mystery in the conception of a work of art, other than there is in every other conception. Sometimes it comes upon one suddenly, unexpectedly, like a surprise — and yet, whole, sound, perfect. Sometimes it grows slowly into shape without one's will, hangs vaguely about the mind for a long time in a misty way, and finally condenses into an absolute shape and presence. Sometimes the seed or germ has been unconsciously within us for years, without our being distinctly aware of it; and after it has been developed and has assumed its final shape, we find hints and presages of it cropping forth here and there in our previous life and thought, now in one shape, now in another, collaterally as it were, and in other relations, before it took to itself a distinct self-existence. It is a plant growing in our garden, unknown, unnamed, almost unobserved, which grows and grows, and at last bursts into flower; or again, it is an instant's crystallization of what

was before invisible or dimly perceived. Courting the muse, as the cant phrase runs, is, I suppose, cultivating generally all the sentiments, feelings, and thoughts which lie on the ideal side of our nature. Sometimes a chance word or tone fires a whole train, dormant and out of sight, which we have unconsciously been laying.

B. Then you do not set yourself willfully a subject, and work it out and try it in various shapes?

M. I do not think I do, or very rarely, and then it usually comes to nothing. My notion is that our best work is done when we are possessed by an idea, and not when we are striving after one. Inspiration is the inbreathing of an influence from without and above, that can only really live in us and become an essential part of us when the interior nature is in a condition to be fecundated. The individual mind is, as it were, the matrix which is impregnated by the universal mind, and then alone can it conceive. It cannot of itself create. When all is fit and the spirit of man is receptive, the idea suddenly comes upon us without our will and without our power to compel or resist its coming. It is received and quickened within our life and being, and takes from outward nature only its body and organism. It is what we call it in common speech, a conception. Therefore, of course, all possible culture and preparation are necessary, for according to our interior life and nature will be the outward product of our art. If the seed fall on stony places, there will be no germination. The fit soil

must be ready. Depend upon it that thoughts are begotten in us by an over-power, whatever we may choose to call it. No one thing in nature makes itself by itself. There is a double germ, a double action, a passive and active, an influence and an effluence, in everything. The Spirit or effluence of God brooded over the water in the legend of the origin of things, — over the water, the most susceptible and open element, not over the earth.

B. You seem to have a high philosophy about these things, and to think that the artist does not create his own works. You would call genius, then, a receptive capacity, and not a creative one, — or rather, not an originating one.

M. Certainly. How can genius originate anything out of nothing? It can only give, at the utmost, shape and form to ideas which come it knows not whence. Whence do you get your thoughts? Do you create them? Take from the artistic nature its receptive capacity, its sensibility to impressions, and what remains? It ceases to be an artistic nature — and it creates nothing. The creative faculty is in exact balance with the receptive faculty. You cannot express more than has been impressed on the mind.

B. Is not this rather paradoxical? Are you not playing with words? Is not this very vague and visionary?

M. I dare say it is very vague. But are not all the operations of the mind very vague? How can we do more than hint at any of them? You can-

not think, or feel, or love according to your will. An influence rules you which is beyond your grasp of understanding, which sways you to its motions.

B. But if the artist receives all, what he creates is very little to his credit.

M. In one sense it certainly is not. It would be the greatest folly in him to be vain; nor do I understand how a truly great genius can be vain. He is certainly entitled to all praise for the care and culture with which he trains his mind and his powers in the higher plane of his intelligence and emotion, as well as in the lower one of his mechanical skill and handicraft; for by this means he prepares himself for the best influences which may be exerted upon him, and for their truest representation through the forms and methods of his art. But, after all, he knows that the higher part of his art — the creative, the ideal part — is done through him, and not by him; that he is possessed while he works, and that he cannot give the why and the wherefore of what he does. He does it by no rule. Twice two will not always make four, spiritually, and art is not a multiplication table. He obeys somewhat which he can neither understand nor govern. A secret force guides and moves him. Yes! great genius is, I believe, unconscious of its own power, and certainly is never vain of it. Nay, I go further, and believe that after the completion of anything a strange fear haunts every man lest he be abandoned to himself, and the inspiration for the future denied. Besides, he knows how im-

perfect his work is; how far it falls below his intentions; how little he has been able to seize and embody of all that was breathing through him. It is only small natures that are satisfied with what they have done. What the artist can do is to keep his instrument in tune, and this it is incumbent on him to do.

B. I am inclined to think, with you, that genius of a first order is unconscious and without vanity. Shakespeare certainly was, or at all events he would seem to have been, very careless of his productions, and I think his genius touched the highest point that literature has ever reached. Michel Angelo, in his last days, made a design of himself as a child in a go-cart, with this motto under it, "Ancora imparo," — I am yet learning. Raffaelle was more conscious, and a lesser nature.

M. Yes, I doubt if Raffaelle ever would have reached a higher point than he had already reached at the age of thirty-seven. His enthusiasm and love of art were on the wane, and his last works have little of the sincerity of feeling and purpose shown in his earlier ones. He had a susceptible nature, full of delicacy and grace, but not a great nature; and, finally, he became rather academic. I dare say this will seem to you a terrible heresy.

B. No; I am quite of your opinion. I always feel a certain want of depth in even his best work, as if it were done more through natural facility and a sense of grace than from any deep inspiration. His natural gifts were extraordinary and

his faculty of composition remarkable, but the best of him was expressed in his early works. There is always sweetness and refinement, great skill in the drawing and putting together of his pictures; but they have neither great purpose nor intensity of feeling. His Madonnas are generally conscious in their grace, and almost invariably cold towards the child; very seldom do they even look at him, and never are they wrapt in him. Correggio's Madonnas, on the contrary, only exist for the child. They do not think of themselves, but of him: they bend over him, are absorbed in him, love him, and adore him with all their souls; he is their world. But Raffaelle's are cold, and pure, and sweet, more like stepmothers than real mothers, and they hold their baby not as if he were their own, but rather as if he had been lent to them. Raffaelle never fought with the unseen world as Michel Angelo did. He seems to have taken life lightly and easily, and to have had no despairs. He was an accomplished and refined artist, but a superficial one, and he had done the best of which he was capable when he died. His ambition prompted him to assume at one time the style of Michel Angelo, but in this he utterly failed. That mighty style was foreign to his genius. He was not a great thinker. His pictures please, but they do not stimulate.

M. You must, however, except the Dresden Madonna, called the San Sisto. It is certainly a wonderful work, free and noble in style, and the

child's expression is of that large dignity and ideal character that one sometimes sees in children, looking dreamily out on a world they do not take in. It is painted very loosely and sketchily, and was evidently done at a heat, but he had the good sense to leave it as it was. It is his highest inspiration, in my opinion.

B. He is generally called the religious painter, — more, I suppose, from the subjects he treated than from the spirit in which they were conceived. Yet to me, in religious spirit and depth of feeling, nothing he ever did compares with the "Entombment of Christ" by Titian, now in the Louvre.

M. That is truly a wonderful picture, — take it for all in all, perhaps the most perfect picture that ever was painted. The low, sombre key of its color is so perfectly in accord with the solemn sentiment of the scene; the coloring in itself so rich, massive, and powerful; the light and shade so admirably distributed; the composition so finely balanced; and the individual characters of the persons so justly discriminated in their expression and action that it seems to me the first of religious pictures. It is all felt as a painter should feel, in every part. The landscape, the sky, the coloring, harmonize with the pathos of the scene, and are beautiful and solemn in themselves.

B. Raffaelle used the hands of others to execute his work more than any other painter who ever lived, and finally left the greatest part of it for them to do. There is scarcely a touch of his

brush in the frescoes of Cupid and Psyche in the Farnesina Palace. He was thinking then more of the Fornarina than of his art, and real love seemed to him far preferable to ideal and painted Loves and Venuses. In his last picture of the Transfiguration, I do not believe he painted anything with his own hand, except perhaps the upper part. The composition was his, and, for my own part, I think it is very bad; but the execution was chiefly by Julio Romano, whose heavy brush is everywhere visible. It is not to me an agreeable picture, and has no unity of character or composition. The masses, chiaroscuro, and color of the lower part are disagreeable; while the forms and attitudes are academic, and lack nature and truth.

M. The severest criticism ever made on Raffaelle was by Michel Angelo, towards the end of Raffaelle's life. He had constantly left so much to be done by his pupils that his friends as well as his enemies began to wink and shrug their shoulders; and this coming to his ears, he determined, after the frescoes of Cupid and Psyche in the Farnesina were finished, to paint the first fresco in the adjoining hall entirely with his own hand. He accordingly began the Galatea, and was already well advanced with it, when one day, while he was absent, a visitor called to see him. The scaffoldings were around the room preparatory for the other decorations, and the visitor, after looking at the Galatea for a while, mounted the ladder, and with a fragment of charcoal drew a colossal head on the

wall beneath the cornice. Raffaelle did not return, however, and after waiting for some time the visitor departed, refusing to give his name to the servant, but saying, "Show your master that, and he will know who I am." Some time after Raffaelle came in, and on inquiring if any one had been there, his servant told him a small, black-bearded man had been there and drawn a head on the wall, by which he said he would recognize him. Raffaelle looked up, saw the head, and exclaimed, "Michel Angelo!" That he felt what was meant, and accepted the criticism, there can be little doubt, for he painted no other picture in the hall.

B. What do you suppose he meant?

M. He meant to show Raffaelle that his fresco was on too small a scale for the size of the room, and that it was executed in the style of a cabinet picture, and not in the grand style appropriate for such a place. Go and look at it yourself, and you cannot doubt its meaning, nor can you doubt the justness of the criticism, severe as it was. A similar story, you may remember, is told of Apelles and Protogenes, and perhaps they are both myths. I confess that I have little faith in these tales about artists.

B. What is the story you refer to?

M. It is told by Pliny. He relates that Apelles, on arriving at Rhodes, immediately went to call upon Protogenes, who was then living there. Protogenes, however, was absent, and the studio was in charge of an old woman, who, after Apelles had

looked at the pictures, asked the name of the visitor, to give to her master on his return. Apelles did not answer at first, but observing a large blank panel prepared for painting on an easel, he took up a pencil and drew an extremely delicate outline on it, saying, "He will recognize me by this," and departed. On the return of Protogenes, being informed of what had happened, he looked at the outline, and struck by its extreme delicacy, exclaimed, "That is Apelles — no one else could have executed so perfect a work." Then taking up another pencil with a different color, he drew a still more delicate outline on the same panel, and went out, saying, "If the visitor returns, show him that." Apelles did return, and on seeing the second outline, ashamed of having been surpassed by Protogenes, he again took up a pencil, and with a third color divided the other outlines with one so delicate as to defy competition. Protogenes, on seeing this, acknowledged himself conquered, and immediately ran down to the shore to find the great master and welcome him. This panel with the three outlines was long kept with the greatest care, and held by all, and especially artists, to be a miracle of art. Standing among many admirable and celebrated pictures, it nevertheless eclipsed them all, though at first sight so delicate were these outlines that the panel looked like a mere blank space. It was afterwards destroyed in the burning of Cæsar's House, where it was kept.

B. I do not quite understand. Were the lines drawn over each other, one more delicate than the other, or were there three distinct outlines?

M. Chi sa? The story is not quite intelligible to any one. Pliny says Apelles first drew "lineam summæ subtilitatis," — an extremely fine line. Then, that Protogenes drew "lineam tenuiorem" — a still more delicate line — "in ipsa illa;" but whether he means by this on the same line or on the same panel is doubtful. Then Apelles with the third line, "secuit," divided the other lines. The question is what he meant by "lineam." Probably it was an outline of a figure, or a profile perhaps, or a *lineamentum*, — a likeness. That it does not mean simply a line is plain from the passage immediately following, in which he says that "it was the constant habit of Apelles not to allow a day to go by without drawing a design or outline" (lineam ducendo). "Secuit," again, may mean dividing in the sense of drawing a third outline across the others, or over and within them, or between them. In which last case there would be three outlines or designs side by side.

B. It 's like a conundrum.

M. But without a satisfactory answer. It has, however, served to puzzle a good many persons — and you and me among the rest. However, to go back to Raffaelle, — what we say of him, if we have any consideration for our reputation for taste and judgment, we must whisper, and not speak aloud.

B. I have sometimes thought Raffaelle would have made quite as good a sculptor as painter; and I am not quite sure that his mind did not naturally rather tend to form than to color. His compositions are always linear, and not in masses either of color or chiaroscuro; and most of them have a better effect as compositions when reduced to outline. Take, for instance, the Loggia series. I doubt if any one who has ever seen them and studied them in outline, or laid out in simple broad tints as they are in Gruner's lithographs, would not be disappointed in seeing the original paintings. Nearly all his compositions can be made into pleasing *bassi-relievi*. They translate, so to speak, with little or no loss, so far as composition is concerned. But Titian, on the contrary, loses terribly, for he composed as a painter; and color and light and dark are the essence of his picture.

M. No doubt there is something in this suggestion; but one reason why the Loggia series do not come up to the expectations of those who have seen them in outline or simple chiaroscuro, besides that which you have mentioned, is the rude and unsympathetic manner in which they are painted. As paintings they are wretched; and their composition is their only merit. But the painting was not done by Raffaelle. He intrusted that to his scholars.

B. How far, in your opinion, is that permissible to an artist?

M. Only just so far as the work is mechanical, or as it is mere assistance which does not affect at all the conception, character, or composition of the work, but merely shortens the manual labor of the real artist. But the less assistance a painter has from other hands the better, unless, as sometimes occurs, it is necessary on account of the extent of surface to be gone over within a certain time. A sculptor may fairly make use of much more assistance, because in putting up a large work from a small model it is of no consequence how the work is begun, provided the clay be roughed into general shape and mass on the iron framework; whereas in painting, the ground tints, from the very beginning, are essential to the result of the coloring in the finished picture.

B. How is it with a sculptor? There has lately been a great deal of discussion of the question how far he is justified in using the hands of others in his work.

M. The matter is very simple. It is the invariable habit of a sculptor first to make his sketch, or small model, of the figure or group. This he does solely with his own hand and from his own mind, and in making this no assistance is permissible. In this the action, the composition, the character, the general masses, the lines, the draperies, in a word the whole creative part, is achieved. The details only are left unfinished. Some sculptors carry their small models much farther on in details and execution than others; and in case a

sculptor intends to intrust to others the putting up of the large model from this, he determines every particular. The small model is then placed in the hands of a workman, who enlarges it by proportional compasses, mechanically, makes a framework of iron and wire, and packs upon this the clay, following by measurement all the forms and masses, and copying it in large in all its parts. He gives the general form, and makes what may be called a large, rude sketch of the small model. How much further he may go in his work depends upon the extent to which the small model is finished. If it be carefully thought out in all its details, his business is to imitate these as well as he can. The sculptor himself generally works with him in all these beginnings, though that is by no means necessary. The work being thus set up and put into general form and mass, after the small model, the sculptor makes what changes and deviations he deems necessary, sometimes entirely altering one action, distributing differently the masses, varying the composition of lines, and working out the details. From the time the general masses are arranged, the assistant is of little or no use, save to copy, under direction of the sculptor, bits of drapery arranged by him on a lay-figure, or from casts in plaster of fragments from nature, or to render him, in a word, any mere mechanical service. All the rest is done by the sculptor's own hands. The assistant's work is purely preparation. Nothing of the arrangement, or of the finish, or of

the feeling is his, and as the work approximates to completion he becomes useless, and the sculptor works alone. Practically speaking, the assistant's work, being mere rough preparation, is invariably again worked over and varied in every part, often entirely pulled down and remodeled, so that nothing remains of it; and it not unfrequently occurs that, after the first packing on of the clay, he is rather an embarrassment than a help, however clever he may be. If you pause to think for a moment, you will see that, however well he may do merely mechanical work, it is impossible, from the nature of things, that he can divine the wishes or convey the spirit and feeling of the artist himself. As to all the essential parts, they must and can be done only by the artist's own hands. He alone knows, or feels rather, what he seeks and wants, and no one can help him. How can any one aid him, for instance, in the character and expression of the face, in the arrangement of the draperies, in the pose of the figure, in the *finesse* of feeling and touch, that constitutes all the difference between a good and a bad work? These things cannot be left to any assistant; they require the artist's own mind and hand.

B. In a word, all that any assistant does is purely mechanical, under the direction of the sculptor. He invents nothing, he designs nothing, and he only copies at best, or prepares the parts for the hand of the sculptor to finish. He is no more the creator of the statue than the copyist of a rough

manuscript is the author; or the mason who executes the material work of a building after the plans of an architect is the architect.

M. Precisely. If he attempt to do anything more, the artist is sure to pull down all his work and do it over again as he wishes to have it, just as an author would erase any interpolation or misreading by the copyist. I think I have stated the outside limits within which any sculptor I know uses the hands of others. But, after all, the small model or sketch is the creation, though no artist limits himself to making that, but carries out himself personally the same thing in the full-sized statue. Another artist might, of course, do it, if the small model be carefully thought out, and in such case he would be entitled to a certain merit of interpretation and workmanship; but he could not claim to be the author, designer, or creator of it. But besides this, many artists work at the marble, and finish it themselves; for when it comes to the last finishing touches, a little more or less makes an enormous difference in expression and feeling, and this the sculptor or creator of the work alone can feel; he cannot even explain.

B. Was it always the practice with sculptors to use the hands of others?

M. Undoubtedly, when they could command them. Phidias, and all the sculptors of his day, had many scholars who assisted them in all their work to a very great extent, and some of the scholars' works were attributed to their masters,

so near were they to them in excellence and talent. No one, however, ever dreamed of saying or thinking that the Athena and Zeus of Phidias were not his works, despite the numbers of sculptors whom he employed to assist him. The same practice has obtained ever since, in all the studios of all the distinguished artists, as, for instance, in our own day, in the studios of Canova, Thorwaldsen, Rauch, Gibson, Tenerani; and it is certainly a very novel notion that lately has been started, that when assistants, even though they were scholars of a distinguished artist, possessing themselves great talent, have been employed on any work of their master, the master was not entitled to call the work his own. Tenerani and Gibson, among others, worked in the studios of Canova and Thorwaldsen, under the direction and on the works of those artists; but they never dreamed of claiming such works as their own in any sense. It would have been too absurd.

B. Was not Michel Angelo an exception to this rule?

M. Michel Angelo was accustomed himself to do a great deal of his own work in the marble; and he thus wasted his great powers in merely mechanical labor, which would have been better done by any competent workmen, because they would have been more careful and mechanical. Through his impatience and enthusiasm, he ruined block after block of marble by working with too great vehemence near the surface. He had a won-

derful faculty as a mere workman in marble, but his genius and impetuosity of temperament would not brook the opposition of so stubborn a material, and unfitted him for those first processes of roughing out into shape the block, which require patience and precision. Too eager to arrive at a point where his true genius would find play, he assailed the marble with such violence that he often struck off pieces which trenched into the just limits of the surface; and as they could not be replaced, he was forced to finish as he could, — not as he would. Had he confined himself more to elaborating his work in clay, and then intrusting the blocking out in marble to a mechanical workman, we should have had not only a much larger number of grand works by him, but they would have been freer of great defects. For instance, the back of the head of Moses has been chiseled away until it is an impossible head. Again, the David is sacrificed to the exigencies of the marble; and the head of his famous Day was probably left unfinished because he perceived that it was turned beyond the limit permitted to nature without breaking the neck.

B. Still it produces a magnificent effect, finer than if it had been finished. It seems as if day were struggling out from clouds and darkness.

M. I am quite of your opinion. I did not mean to criticise it, but only to state a fact. The defect is not now so apparent as it would have been had he attempted to finish it, and certainly its very im-

perfection lends it a singular power and character. Michel Angelo is one of those mighty geniuses that is above criticism. He impresses you in his great works so powerfully that you have no wish to criticise him. Any sculptor can point out his defects, they are so plain and manifest; but nobody has ever managed so to wreak himself upon marble, and to stamp so tremendous an energy into any works of art. The Sistine Chapel is to me the most gigantic work that ever was accomplished in art. The intellect, the force of will, the vigor and grandeur, stamped upon these frescoes is so great that they overpower you. Everything else seems feeble after them. So, too, the Day and Night in the Medici Chapel have something terrible in their solemnity. They are all wrong, if you please, full of defects, impossible, unnatural, but they are grand thoughts and mighty in their character, and they overawe you into silence. I would counsel no artist to attempt to copy them or form his style upon them; let him rather absorb them as impressions than study them as models. They will fill him with a sense of grandeur, so taken in; but they afford no basis for a school. The works of Michael Angelo's followers were characterized by wild exaggeration and intemperance of style. They strove by excess to arrive at grandeur. They imitated his defects and lost his spirit. Bernini was almost a maniac in his art. He observed no restraint, and would not limit his talent by the true boundaries of sculpture. There is no doubt

that he was a man of great talent, if not of genius; but his genius all went astray and in a false direction. His attempts were beyond his powers, and he has left us almost nothing but exaggerated and oppressive works. Sculpture owes a great debt of gratitude to Canova, who led it back into quieter fields, and taught it self-restraint, and preached again the gospel of temperance, according to the Greeks. Theirs is the true school of form and method, simple, dignified, and strong. Let us, if possible, infuse into this form the modern spirit of intensity, emotion, and passion, which they did not attempt. That, in my opinion, is the problem we should seek to solve.

B. Why do you suppose they never attempted this?

M. Plainly because it was in contradiction with their religion. Religion and art go hand in hand through all history. The loftiest religious sentiment of the Greeks was passionless repose. They strove to get to a centre where all was calm, and removed from the wild whirl of human passions and excitement. Sculpture was consecrated first to the gods, and it represented them, in their character of calmness and dignity, superior to mere human influences. From this basis it never wandered far, even in the representation of demigods and heroes. Their very portraiture partook of this character. The sternness of the stone demanded serious subjects, and in the best period of their art they never degraded it to triviality

and genre. They sought to express character and repose, not agitations or incidents. The religion of the Greeks was like a circle with a centre of repose. The Christian religion, on the contrary, is like a spiral generated by an aspiring centre. Their highest ideal was calm; ours is unrest and longing. They sought the peace of tranquilized passions and feelings, and the quiet acceptance of life within its limits here; we look forward with longing to another life, and our thoughts and hopes project themselves beyond into the infinite. Their ideal was heroic, self-contained manliness, a dignified bearing under the inevitable decrees of fate, and a clear development of their own interior natures; ours is found in self-surrender and other-worldliness. Of course all this must express itself in the highest products of art. We see, therefore, in Greece grand, simple, dignified forms, — manly, self-contained, and agitated by no passions or violent emotions. Christian art, on the contrary, abounds in contortions of form, and embodies abnegations, sorrows, self-tormentings, and martyrdoms. Simple manliness has departed. We are worms not worthy to be considered. This life is a contemptible affair. Hitherto, at least, this has been the character of Christian art. But another era seems now to be dawning, — of simplicity, of self-restraint, of nature. The danger of the present day, however, is lest we subordinate art too much to mere imitation, and decline into the trivial and sentimental. The true sphere of

art to-day is to fuse into the grand forms and moulds of the Greek a deeper emotion, a more natural feeling, and a higher enthusiasm, — to lift ourselves to great subjects, and to treat them with intensity as well as with simplicity. But to stop preaching, for I am afraid I am giving you what Lamb translated *sermoni propriora* to mean, — things properer for a sermon. Let us go back to what we were saying about the assistance which great artists have ever accepted from other hands. There used to be schools, and great masters had many pupils, all working together harmoniously. This was the case in Greece in the ancient days, and in Italy in the revival of art. Leonardo and Raffaelle, Gian Bellini and Titian, as well as Polygnotus and Zeuxis, or Phidias and Lysippus, and the rest, had all of them pupils who worked with them and for them ; and by this consentaneous labor and thought they were able to achieve their great works. We at the present are for the most part individuals, each working for himself and by himself, in competition with all others ; and the moment any one works in accord with another, Envy cries out, or crawls and hisses in secret, and tries to defraud the master of his right. But Leonardo worked for Verrocchio in his studio, as Raffaelle did for Perugino, and Luini for Leonardo ; each helped the other, each was taught by the other. Art was then a great guild. Now every artist "fights for his own hand," to use the phrase of Harry Gow.

B. It is the fashion now to pull down the idols of the past and set up new and hitherto comparatively unknown ones in their place; to rehabilitate the degraded, and to reverse the decisions and the decrees of history. Speculation and criticism seek out dark spots, and drag new heroes into light, while they who stand in the light of fame are scrutinized so closely that they seem but common things, after all. If we go on at this rate much further, we shall not have a villain left, nor a beauty, nor a hero. Helen was an old hag past sixty at the beginning of the Trojan war. Judas is already on his feet. Nero is absolved from his murders. Henry VIII. has become a noble, free-hearted spirit; and as for his wives, the new verdict is, "Served them right." William Tell has vanished into the darkness of myths. Eugene Aram is a dramatic sentimentalist who could n't help himself. No one but maniacs in their fits of madness are now guilty of murder. Even Byron's perfect purity has been called in question. Almost no villain is left us except Cain, and let us grapple to him with hooks of steel. Let no man try to take Cain from us. What would life be worth without him? Alas! we are getting weak in our faith.

M. Your words recall to me, though it has little to do with what you were saying, a story of an ardent Presbyterian who was discussing with a brother churchman the character and religious belief of X, their common friend. The first of them

thought X was going all wrong; that his life was well enough, but on questions of doctrine and faith he was very shaky. "Ah, no! I don't agree with you," said the other; "X is all right, I am sure. He thoroughly believes in total depravity." "He may believe in it," was the answer, "as a dogma; but the question is, Does he act up to it in his life? I am afraid he does n't."

B. I am becoming so confused of late as to who is good and who is bad, and the cards are getting so shuffled as to what anybody did and said, that I scarcely venture now to allude to any historical statement, or to speak of any historical personage, without a fear that I may be utterly mistaken in common with nearly everybody else, at least of my age. But there is a pleasure in paradox as much as there is "in the pathless woods," or in "the ocean's roar." Mr. Hayward, in a delightful essay, has clearly shown that there is scarcely a single famous sentence which History has put into the mouth of anybody that was ever really spoken; and that generally the legends and pretty stories about great men are inventions. So one by one all the old props are giving way, and nothing will be left but original sin, and the three apples, of Eve, and Venus, and Discord, which are so far away that we cannot quite reach them.

M. The *rôle* that apples play in old myths is very strange; of all fruits they would seem to be the least tempting.

B. Do you mean to undermine all the foundations of our faith?

M. Sir, — as Dr. Johnson would say, — would you limit the investigation of truth by the legends of history? If so — to use another of his brief and piquant sentences — you are a fool.

B. I know I am. I have the folly still to believe that Homer really existed, despite Professors Wolf and Lachmann and their followers. And, do you know, it strikes me as rather odd that we, as late as the latter part of the nineteenth century, after the old Greek language has suffered such change, should still, though foreigners in clime and time, be able to detect, philologically, discrepancies and contradictions which did not strike the ancient Greeks themselves, in their own familiar tongue. Undoubtedly they believed Homer to be an actual person, who wrote a continuous poem, which was quite familiar to them. Whether the foundation of these verses was legendary and traditional or not, does not touch the question, any more than the fact that the plays of Shakespeare were founded upon traditional history and old stories, and even on prior compositions, partially in some cases imbedded in them, would invalidate his claim to their authorship. None the less, the Greeks deemed that Homer had existed, and had put the story into this poetic and rhythmic form, and that is what is meant by authorship in every poem. Is it not probable that they were far better judges of all questions relating to language and unity of character, and other similar points on which the new theory is founded, than we can pos-

sibly be; and is it probable that they would have been deceived in regard to a poem which was so familiar to them, and so constantly recited before them and read by them? "Credat Judæus Apella." Vastly superior, as no doubt we are, to the ancient Greeks in our knowledge of their language, poetry, and history, and everything else which concerned them, I am fool enough to stick to Homer with them, rather than to throw him over with the learned professors of our day. I prefer to be imposed upon with Plato, Pericles, Æschylus, Aristotle, and the rest of those ignorant boys, rather than to be right with the philosophers and critics of to-day.

M. Your illustration of the case by reference to Shakespeare and his plays is very unfortunate. Are you not aware that Shakespeare himself never wrote any of his plays, but only lent his name to them to conceal the true author, who was Lord Bacon? The poor fellow was weak and good-natured. The very epithets given him by his friends of gentle or sweet Will plainly show this; and Bacon bought him, or his name, to use as a cloak and a shield. It is ridiculous to imagine that a fellow like him, born and bred in Stratford-on-Avon, and a hanger-on and second-rate actor at theatres, could possibly ever have written anything like what is ascribed to him. Ben Jonson, indeed, and all his contemporaries, were fearfully deceived; but then Ben Jonson was only a bricklayer. Greene, too, called him an upstart crow,

who beautified himself with the feathers of others; and Greene must have known, as he assisted Shakespeare in rewriting and readapting parts of some old plays, — though it is strange that he should not have known that Shakespeare did not really write the remainder, and should not have suspected the real author, Bacon. It is very doubtful whether there ever was such a person; and if there was, he was not the author of the poems and plays ascribed to him. Lord Bacon wrote them.

B. I had forgotten this. You are right. But what a pity! The portrait, after all, that forms the frontispiece to the plays does not look like a perfect fool. It is not a bad nor a mean forehead, is it? If the person it represents did not do something remarkable, one cannot help wondering why not, with that great brain, and that speaking face. What did Ben Jonson mean by those verses of his, saying that this "was for the gentle Shakespeare cut"? Did he mean by gentle, silly? When he spoke of his wit, did he speak ironically? Or did Bacon buy up him too, and get him to write this lie? Joking apart, I think nothing more monstrous was ever conceived than this theory. It is too foolish even to be entitled to consideration.

M. Yet I understand that Judge Nathaniel Holmes has lately written a long book to uphold this preposterous theory. I have not seen it, but I do not doubt, from what I hear, that he has argued the question with skill. But, after all, is it not to be put in the category of Whately's historic doubts as to the existence of Napoleon?

B. It is said that Lord Palmerston was a convert to this theory; but I fancy it was with him — if the report be true — merely through a love of paradox, as it is with some others I know, who profess to believe in it. One of the chief grounds for assuming the possibility of such a notion is drawn from the difficulty of supposing any single man could be possessed of sufficient genius, knowledge, and culture to be able to produce such works. But by supposing these plays to have been written by two persons, we simply double the difficulty. Then there must have been two extraordinary geniuses at work, — one in the dark, and one in the light. If we suppose them to have been written by Bacon, and not Shakespeare, we run into still greater difficulties. We must suppose that, avid of fame as Bacon was, he utterly concealed his authorship of works immeasurably superior to all his other works put together, and which would have given him a world-wide fame; that he was a great poet, which is contrary to his known character and to all his writings; that he employed a man named Shakespeare falsely to assume the authorship, which makes Shakespeare a very contemptible personage, contrary to the express testimony of all who knew him; that the complete manuscripts of the original plays which, at Shakespeare's death, were in his possession, and from which they were printed by his friends after his death, were not written by him, — which is preposterous, — or at least were copied by him from

the original MSS., which were destroyed; that Bacon was familiar with all the life and scenery of Stratford; that not only all Shakespeare's familiar friends, — authors and collaborators, actors and noblemen, — but the whole world — were deceived willfully by both; that this lie was acted out through the life of both for no plausible reason, and after their death continued to be acted for centuries; that Bacon was guilty of all the mistakes in the plays, such as that Bohemia is a seaport, and many more difficulties and impossibilities.

M. It is not worth while to argue the question. I am surprised that you take the trouble; we are in the habit of supposing that our ignorance in respect to the life of Shakespeare is very exceptional. But it is not so at all; we know no more, nay, not even so much, about Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Webster, Heywood, Ford, Dekker, or any of the other authors of his day, of the same social rank and position in life.[1] As to Webster, for instance, we do not know when or where he was born, how long he lived, or even what works he wrote. A few are accredited to him, as those wonderful and ghastly plays, "Vittoria Corombona," "The Duchess of Malfi," and one or two others; but whether certain other works in prose were

[1] The age was not one of biography, and of none of the great authors of the period have we any but the most cursory and meagre records, unless those authors were in public life, held government offices, were attendant upon the court, and of aristocratic position; such, for instance as Sidney, Raleigh, and Bacon.

written by him or not is quite problematical. Our knowledge as to Marlowe is equally obscure, and the few facts relating to him which are known are by no means clear or sure. The same remarks may be made in regard to Peele and Greene, and Shakespeare's associates on the stage, Burbage and the rest. We really know little or nothing about any of them, more than a few questionable facts. It may be said as truly that Bacon wrote all their works as that he wrote Shakespeare's.

B. I have no doubt he did; and, to use the legal form of question, if not, why not?

M. So, too, what do we know of Thomas Heywood, whom Charles Lamb calls a sort of prose Shakespeare, beyond the few avowals he makes about himself in one or two of his prefaces? Outside of these confidences we really know next to nothing. Yet he was a dramatic author of high repute in his own day, and he tells us that he had "an entire hand, or at least a main finger, in two hundred and twenty plays." Yet not only about nine tenths of his plays are lost, but also all the history of his life, except some very few facts and dates.

B. Only some twenty-three plays left out of two hundred and twenty, are there not?

M. I will not be sure of the exact number of plays we still possess by Heywood, but it is about this number.

B. How do you account for this?

M. He gives us one reason himself in one of

his prefaces, I think to "The English Traveller," in which, after a covert sneer at Ben Jonson and others who "expose unto the world their volumes under the name of works," he goes on to say that "many of his writings, by shifting and change of companies, have been negligently lost; others have been retained in the hands of some actors who think it against their peculiar profit to have them come into print; and a third, that it was never any great ambition in him to be in this kind voluminously read." Whether Shakespeare shared with him the last feeling or not, he evidently pursued the same course in not printing his plays. At all events, whether he had this feeling or not, an all-sufficient reason for his not publishing them is to be found in the fact stated by Heywood, that the actors were jealous of having them printed as detracting from their profit; and we are not sure that there may not have been many other plays by Shakespeare of which we have no record. Thank Heaven that we have preserved so many!

B. There seems to have been gross carelessness, to say the least, in the preservation of plays at this period. Chettle alone, if I remember right, wrote thirty-eight plays, and of these only four are known; and the entire plays of almost no one of the dramatists of the period are preserved.

M. Is it not enough to make one tear one's hair to think that any of Shakespeare's plays should be lost?

B. It is indeed. But to go back to Bacon. Let

us compare for a moment his verses with Shakespeare's. We have acknowledged verses by him; and since he acknowledged these, why be ashamed of those which he printed under the pseudonym of Shakespeare? Listen: Bacon thus writes verse which he avows as his own: —

> "Domestic cares afflict the husband's bed
> Or pains his head.
> Those that live single take it for a curse,
> Or do things worse.
> Some would have children, those that have them moan
> Or wish them gone.
> What is it then to have or have no wife
> But single thraldom or a double strife?"

Imagine the man who thought this was poetry to have written the songs, sonnets, and plays of Shakespeare! One cannot help laughing.

M. My own view is that Shakespeare must have written these lines, if Bacon wrote his. It was change and change about, — what one wrote the other gave his name to. Can anything be more machine-made than they are? Yet they are good enough for a poor player, and we know that domestic cares *did* afflict Shakespeare's bed, and probably pains his head, — he had such a large one. So it seems very clear that he must have written this poem.

B. What sort of an actor do you suppose Shakespeare was? He is said to have taken only the second parts, such as that of the king in "Hamlet," and even to have played old Adam in "As You Like It."

M. Oh, he took that part out of pure good-nature. I have little doubt that he was an excellent actor, but too quiet, simple, and natural in his acting to please the public taste, which demanded loudness, bombastic action, declamation, and exaggeration. The same characteristics still exist on the English stage, and I suppose they have always existed. Partridge's opinion of Garrick and his acting represents the popular feeling of to-day. He was too natural — too "simple, natural, affecting;" anybody might act Hamlet like him. Give me the king for my money, says Partridge, or he who could strut and declaim and tear a passion to rags. Hamlet's advice to the players shows what Shakespeare's notion of good acting was. It was to hold the mirror up to nature, — not to rant and strut and scream like the town-crier, to split the ears of the groundlings. But the public taste was different. They liked what they did not see in life, just as the chambermaids and middle classes of to-day like novels of high life, and ghastly adventures, and sensational incidents, and murders. I am sorry to say that even among educated persons there is a preference in England for exaggerated action in tragedy and in comedy. Comedy on our stage is but too often turned into farce and grimace; tragedy into rant, and what is called elocution, God save the mark! which means artificial intonation and pronunciation, such as no human being in his senses would use in daily life. There are exceptions, I know, to this; but it is

characteristic of English acting. I am sometimes afraid that the tragic actor will burst a blood-vessel in his violence, and I am pretty sure the comic actor will descend to grimace and caricature to get a laugh from the pit and to split the ears of the groundlings. It is a satisfaction, by way of exception, to hear such quiet acting as that of Mr. Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle;" and I am glad to see in some of the theatres, and among some of the actors, a better and simpler taste growing up, and at least an effort to render nature.

B. "Oh, it offends me to the very soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant."

M. "I warrant your honor." One can say nothing more to the purpose than Shakespeare in this advice to the actors. His words are as true to-day, as to English actors, as they were in his own time.

B. I am struck with one vicious peculiarity of English actors which has lately made its appearance, that of pronouncing English with a French accent and inflection. Why pos-sī-ble? why ag-ō-ny? why ā-mus-ing? and so on. Has this been caught from Mr. Fechter? This is especially to be observed in the actresses. The actors have less of it. It is not only the accent, but the inflection

of voice, which is false, and imitated apparently from the French. Talk with these women off the stage, and they speak like anybody else; hear them on the stage, and one would suppose they were foreigners.

M. We are not natural actors, as the Italians are, nor have we the accomplishment and restraint of the French on the stage. The reason of this is plain. The Italians use great gesticulation and action in daily life. They talk with their hands, their shoulders, their bodies, and when they are on the stage they only do what they are accustomed to do in common conversation off the stage. So, too, the French gesticulate freely in expressing themselves. But we ordinarily use no gesticulation at all; we sit or stand very still, without using our hands and arms, and the consequence is that when we are on the stage, and are forced to employ gesture and action, we are doing something which we are not accustomed to, and we do it awkwardly and unnaturally. Besides, the Anglo-Saxon is always self-conscious, and this necessarily begets awkwardness and affectation. No person can be natural unless he forgets himself. Generally speaking, we are encumbered with our hands and arms, and know not what to do with them. The Italians stand and move with far greater naturalness, and therefore far greater grace.

B. Did it ever strike you how characteristic of each nation is its form of salutation? The Italians say, "Come sta?" and "Come va?" — How do

you stand? and How do you go? — because naturally, when an Italian is well, he stands easily and he moves easily. The French say, "Comment vous portez-vous?" — How do you carry yourself? — for a Frenchman always wishes to make an appearance and an impression through his deportment. The English, who are essentially an active and doing people, engaged in business and always at work, say, "How do you do?" while the German, who is generally wandering in a maze, and whose intellectual tendencies are vague and metaphysical, asks, "Wie befinden sie sich?" — How do you find yourself?

M. Very characteristic, and particularly the last. The wonder is how the speculative German ever does find himself.

B. There is another common form of speech which has struck me as characteristic and distinctive of the Latin and Catholic nations from the northern and Protestant nations. The Latins and Catholics always say "Credo," — I believe, — while the northern nations say, "I think;" for the simple reason that the former take everything on trust and as a matter of belief, while the latter refer it to their reason and accept it as a matter of opinion. No Italian or Spaniard ever says, "Penso," — I think; he believes so, — he does not think so. He has been accustomed so long to having his thinking done for him by others, that he only accepts and believes. No Englishman ever believes anything until he has thought it over.

M. It is a curious fact, which never occurred to me, but it seems to indicate the distinction you have stated. It is also singular how little either the Greeks or Romans seem to have used the simple form of assent, as we do our Yes, even if they had it, which I confess seems to me doubtful. Nae, in Latin, which most nearly approximates to it, is but an adoption of the Greek Nai, and has rather the character of an oath or absolute affirmation than our simple assent, and, besides, was rarely used in their writings. Their usual form of assent seems to have been by reaffirming the same proposition or statement. They certainly, if we may judge from their writings, had no word in common use corresponding to our Yes. Neither of them could have said of his nation, as the Italians do of theirs, "Il bel paese dove si suona il si;" nor could it ever have been a joke with foreigners to say to them, "Nae" or "Nai," as it is to many a one now who makes the crowd laugh when an Englishman passes, by "Yas, yas!" Their "Ita est" is almost as bad as the vulgar American "That 's so," which is a literal translation of it.

B. I do not believe they had any Yes corresponding to ours. They certainly had no No, and I cannot understand how they got on in conversation without it. Think of a people who could n't say "No" and stumbled over "Yes"!

M. Their conversation could never have been, "Yea, yea, and Nay, nay"! But then they were pagans. You could not expect it.

B. I wish we had some real specimens of their conversation. I hope for all their sakes they were not always on stilts, and talking as they do in their books. The jokes they have recorded, and particularly Cicero's, are very flat to us, but they seem to have been extremely amused with them, which gives me a notion that they had very little *esprit* or humor in their talk.

M. I will never believe Antony did not know how to talk. Ah! he was a man after my heart; he is the one of the old Romans I should have liked to know. I don't at all wonder that Cleopatra fell madly in love with him, nor, for the matter of that, that he fell madly in love with her. What a pair! What nights of revel, what days of splendor, they must have known!

B. Suppose we could call up out of the past any of them we wished to gather round our board, and make a night of it, whom would you invite? We will invite in turn; only let the company be small. Counting ourselves as nothing, nine will be enough, — the number of the Muses. You shall begin. First the men.

M. My first man, then, shall be Antony, with his bull-neck, his rich, curling hair, his robust figure, his deep-set, sparkling eyes, and his brave, open look.

B. And mine Shakespeare. I need not describe him. The handsomest man at the table, whoever comes; flowing and free in spirit and power, — the divine Williams.

M. I should have said Shakespeare first, but I was thinking of the ancients. Next, I shall say Alcibiades, and he shall bring his dog, if he chooses. We shall get some fun out of him, I fancy.

B. Yes — and no; he might cut up rough, as he did sometimes. However, let him stand; and now we have Greece and Rome represented, let us have some one from Italy. Who shall it be? Shall it be Boccaccio, Leonardo, Giorgione, Cæsar Borgia, Alexander VI., or who? On the whole, as we are to have supper, and be jolly, I fix on Boccaccio.

M. I think you have chosen right. In my mind it lay between him and Giorgione. Giorgione was a fine fellow, but we will invite him some other day. As for Cæsar Borgia and Alexander, I like to be sure of my liquors, and that they have not been tampered with. No aqua Tofana, if you please. Well, now, we must have some one from France. What do you say? I propose Rabelais or Montaigne.

B. Oh, Montaigne, of course. Rabelais would not do. Montaigne will be perfect for supper; and I know he will like to meet Antony. Now, it is my turn. I ought to choose a German now; but who is there among them one would like to see on such an occasion — Goethe?

M. Gott bewahr! He would play the great man, and preach and prose.

B. Let me see, — Lessing, Schiller, Beethoven,

Mozart, Handel, Uhland; no, — none of them will do. If we could only have Beethoven or Mozart by themselves, and listen — yes; but to supper — no! They would all be too heavy and dull. There is nobody I can think of but Jean Paul, or Heine.

M. H'm — h'm — Jean Paul. Well, if Germany must come in, let it be Jean Paul. He had a rich sense of humor in him, and I think he will do. I wonder what Alcibiades will think of him!

B. Are we to come down to this century?

M. No, by the way, that won't do. Jean Paul can't come. Otherwise we shall be obliged to enlarge our table; recollect, too, we have not any women as yet. Germany and America are too near us. We must forego both countries, or we shall have too many. No; we must not come nearer than Montaigne.

B. Well, I will name one more, then — Sir Philip Sidney.

M. I take off my cap to him — only I hope he won't read his "Arcadia" to us.

B. No fear of that; he is a gentleman, every inch of him.

M. Now for the women. Cleopatra, of course, first and foremost. Dear serpent of old Nile! Shall she sit with Antony, or Shakespeare?

B. Shakespeare. She belongs to him; and he shall quote himself to her, and tell her that

> "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety."

Next, we will have Aspasia. She will tell us all

about Phidias, and Alcamenes, and Pericles (though I don't care so much about him), and Agoracritos, and Sophocles, and Euripides, and all the rest of them, — and tell us how to pronounce Greek.

M. I shall now name Poppæa — the most beautiful woman in Rome — for I want to know all about Nero, and I know she is full of *esprit* and gayety. We are full now.

M. No, one more; no matter for the Muses. We must have four women, at least. And she shall be Semiramis, the splendid. I insist upon her.

B. So be it. That will do. And we will have a royal banquet.

B. No, not a royal banquet; something very unlike that, I hope.

M. We will shut and bar all the windows, and make our night a week long.

B. Can't we have Phryne? — that is next to having Venus.

M. Yes, we must have Phryne — if only to look at her.

B. I don't know how it affects you, but I am a little intoxicated at merely thinking of these guests of ours. I shall beg Phryne to stay and pose for you afterwards; and I shall come in and see her, and be put into the insane hospital the next day. But you are not working.

M. Good heavens! do you suppose I can work when I am thinking of such a banquet as this?

B. One would think they were but old friends of yours.

M. Ay, so they are; and many a delightful hour I have passed with them. Jane, and Charles, and Tom, and Nannie are not half so real to me. They are as real as pictures, which are far more real than half the people who walk about the earth.

B. I wonder what they will think of our wines — whether they will like champagne, and Johannisberg, and the softest of our old claret.

M. I should think so, unless they seem too light after what they were accustomed to drink in Greece and Rome. From the descriptions of their processes in making wine, it would evidently not have suited our taste. And I fancy they preferred very rich and heavy wines, some of which were honey-sweet, and some thick and almost black — black wine is Homer's epithet. Then their *passum* or raisin-wine, made from grapes dried in the sun and then plunged into boiling oil, does not sound very palatable; nor should we fancy wine confectioned and flavored by the intermixture of sea-water, turpentine, resin, gums, spices, and essential oils.

B. That sounds disgusting; but there is no accounting for tastes. However, "All nature's difference keeps all nature's peace." I suppose their best wine was the Falernian: the name at least sounds as if it must have been good; you seem to taste the word.

M. What do you suppose it was like?

B. I have not an idea. I only suppose it must have been good because — because — it sounds so,

and because all the poets speak of it and praise it. That's about my only reason. I feel as the old lady did about the word Mesopotamia — it is a very comforting word.

M. I suppose it was something like the rough wines of southern Italy — the *vino asciuto* of Velletri, for instance — only thicker and heavier; or perhaps something like rough port. At all events, it was austere (*austerum* is their epithet) or very dry, and, I dare say, not very bad in its pure state. But when they made what they call a "mulsum," it must have been enough to ruin any stomach.

B. What was the mulsum, and how was it made?

M. In making one kind, they took Massic, or Falernian, or some such wine, as the basis of the beverage; and to four parts of wine they added one of honey and various spices, such as nard, cassia, myrrh, and pepper. But there was still a different kind, which was made of must evaporated by heat to half its original bulk; and to this honey was added, so as to make a thick syrup.

B. Well! At any rate, they would not drink much of such a mixture at a time?

M. No; they would drink it immediately before eating — on an empty stomach, to give a whet to their appetites.

B. It would have ruined mine, I am sure. No matter — if they liked it, we must concoct some mulsum for them, and make it thick and slab;

and, since their tastes evidently lay in that direction, we must get some old crusty port or malaga and boil it down with honey, and spice it well; only, I shall take care not to drink any of it myself.

M. We must also have couches for them to recline upon — chairs will never do; and we must look into Petronius, and have everything right from the egg to the apple. I don't see precisely what we shall do about the slaves, but I dare say we can get some from Egypt, or paint some Italians in imitation of the real thing. As for the music which will be necessary, what shall we do? We have none of their instruments, and if we had, we know not how to play on them — and, still worse, we do not even know what their music was; as for the gladiators, we must give them up.

B. Your mind I see is running more on your Greek and Roman and Assyrian guests than on the others. What would Shakespeare do with mulsum or with gladiators and couches?

M. Do precisely as the Greeks and Romans did. They would not know he was not one of them. Antony and Cleopatra would own him at once as an old friend, their best chronicler and painter, to whom they are deeply indebted — and Alcibiades, Poppæa, and Aspasia would clasp hands with him and swear eternal friendship. Never doubt that he would not act and talk with the best, and show himself as thoroughly to the manner born as any ancient Greek or Roman of

them all. As for Montaigne, he too has a good deal of antique Roman blood in him. Sir Philip may be a little out of place, but Antony and Alcibiades would own him and fraternize with him as a gentleman and a soldier, capable of heroic deeds of valor and self-denial, ready to sing the praises of beauty as well as the best, and a thorough Arcadian.

B. What will our Greek and Roman friends say to our trousers and dress-coats and white chokers?

M. Say? They will enjoy them as the greatest joke that ever was known. We shall have inextinguishable laughter to begin with and set us going, and if it flags I shall shoot out my crush-hat at them.

B. Ah! that will not amuse them as much as our Latin pronunciation. If that does not set the table in a roar, there is no more virtue in man.

M. Shakespeare shall sing us two songs: the first, —

> "Come, thou monarch of the vine,
> Plumpy Bacchus, with pink eyne;
> In thy vats our cares be drowned,
> With thy grapes our heads be crowned.
> Cup us till the world go round,
> Cup us till the world go round;"

and Antony shall remember it, and think of Lepidus, and Cæsar, and Pompey, and Enobarbus, to whom it was sung. And then afterwards, for Phryne's special benefit, his favorite air of "Light of Love."

B. Or —

"Take, oh take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn."

M.

"But my kisses bring again,
Bring again;
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain."

Ah! they shall know that we can sing still. But will not this evoke the ghost of Praxiteles out of the very grave? Will not the fine dust of all that once was that great artist thrill in its urn, and quiver at the vibrations of that song, sung to her whose smile was his heaven, — whose eyes were truly "the break of day that did mislead the morn"?

B. Ay, let him come and gaze at her again, and know that love can never die. We will give him a place at the table, and, when our banquet is over, surrender her again to him, to float away into the Past, or wander with him through Elysian fields; and he shall take the song back as a gift, for nothing more exquisite can we give him.

M. Is there any air to this song?

B. Ay; the air of love and passion, longing and despair.

M. I mean, has it been set to music?

B. Not that I know; but it sings itself to every ear that has ever vibrated to the touch of feeling. Will you set it to music?

M. With all my heart and soul; and that is the only way fitly to set it.

B. Some one is knocking at your door — Phryne, perhaps, come to pose as a model. I save myself, as the French say.

M. Come again when you have made all the arrangements for the banquet — *a rivederci.* Oh, by the way, don't forget to engage a photographer for the occasion; we will have some real spirit photographs.

IV.

Mallett. Come in.

Belton. Eccomi quà! — Here I am again! as the clown says when he leaps into the arena.

M. And all smile and cry bravo, and are delighted to see him, being sure that something pleasant is coming.

B. Servo umilissimo di vostra signoria! Mi fa troppo onore.

M. Yes; it is a satisfaction to have some one to talk with who can sympathize with what one is interested in. For the most part, talk is so bald and shallow that it seems like a feeble stream running over pebbles, making a constant noise and babble, as it were, out of fear of silence. With ordinary persons one runs into two dangers; first, of not being understood, and second, of being misunderstood; and the latter is the worse predicament.

B. For the most part, people do not think at all. They have little phrases and formulas which stand in their minds for thoughts and opinions, and they repeat them parrot-like. Most of their notions and ideas and prejudices are mere extraneous accretions, barnacled on to them by men and books in their passage through life, as shells

are on a vessel, but not growing out of them, or really belonging to them.

M. Or, if you will allow me another simile, they are facts and opinions which they have swallowed but not digested. All real knowledge and thought must be transmuted and assimilated into our nature, absorbed into our being, as our food is changed into our blood, and then only is it ours, or rather is it us. Nothing is more striking among men than their utter absence of thinking outside the groove of their practical occupations and interests; and this is specially manifest in matters of Faith, Religion, and Art. Many of those who think they are thinking are merely repeating dead formulas and phrases which they have accepted without investigation of their real meaning. Indeed, I am persuaded that phrases and formulas rule the world more than ideas. They are easy to say, they have a gloss of truth, and they save the trouble of thinking. By dint of constant repetition they get to be accepted for a time as axioms, and in religion words become a fetich, independent of their significance. And, apropos of this, I remember a story of Chief Justice Marshall and Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Calhoun was a man of a vague, metaphysical tendency of mind, who was always philosophizing about the principles of government and politics, and endeavoring to reduce them to formulas. One day, while calling upon Chief Justice Marshall, he began to broach some of his theories, to which the Chief Justice listened in silence. At last Mr. Cal-

houn said, "I have been deeply reflecting of late upon the principles of government, and I have come to the conclusion that they are founded solely on organization and distribution." "Undoubtedly," said the Chief Justice; "but what organization, what distribution, Mr. Calhoun?" "Ah," said Mr. Calhoun, "that I have not yet determined." Is it not amazing that a man with such ability should allow himself to be fooled by the mere phrase "organization and distribution"?

B. I am not surprised. The formula or phrase enunciated in a speech at Newcastle by Earl Russell, on the great civil war in America, that "the two parties are contending on the one side for empire, the other for power," is of the same kind — and it went from mouth to mouth over all England, and was repeated everywhere as an admirable summary of the whole question. But does it mean anything? Which party was contending for empire, and which for power? What is empire as distinguished from power? The formula is concise — but does it mean anything?

M. I never could see that it did, but it had a great success in England. It was a formula that saved the trouble of thinking; a sort of Liebig's extract put up in a portable can, and capable of dilution into infinite twaddle.

B. In the same way intelligent persons will quote with pleasure, images and phrases in the form of verse, which made in simple prose, would only provoke their laughter. Ordinarily, there

seems to be little or no common sense exercised in regard to poetry. There is, I suppose, something in the rhythmical measure of verse which carries the mind away from considering its exact meaning. Certainly the popularity of a quotation has little relation to either its sense or its poetic merit. Indeed, it has always been a mystery to me why certain quotations are popular. As far as simplicity in writing is concerned, we are better in all respects than we were in the early part of the century. We seek at least to be more natural in our expressions, and have rejected in great measure that strained and artificial diction which charmed our grandfathers. We no longer "pour the lay" or "strike the lyre" when we write a poem. Faults enough we have, but at least we strive to write intelligibly.

M. I am not so sure of that. We have not the same kind of unnatural jargon, but we have not entirely rid ourselves of all jargon; and a new reaction is now beginning against the previous reaction of simplicity. I cannot but feel that among some of the latest writers of the present day, there is a tendency to over-refinement and over-elaboration both of phraseology and of thought. Words are strained into new senses, and ideas rarefied into metaphysical and sentimental vagueness.

B. One is certainly disposed sometimes to ask with Antonio, "Is that anything now?"

M. Ay, and to answer with Bassanio, "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing." "His

reasons are as two grains of wheat tied in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you shall find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search."

B. We do not exercise the same kind of judgment in poetry as in prose. The commonest and tritest moral axiom acquires with most persons a special value, if it be put into a rhythmical form.

M. I was very much struck with this in reading one of Carlyle's essays the other day. After quoting the following lines of Goethe: —

> "Die Tugend ist das hochste Gut,
> Das Laster Weh dem Menschen thut," —

he adds, "In which emphatic couplet does there not, as the critics say in other cases, lie the essence of whole volumes such as we have read?" Now, I ask you, is there anything in this bald couplet, — which, literally translated, is, "Virtue is the highest good — Vice does injury to man," — that entitles it to such praise from such a man?

B. It seems to me utterly flat.

M. Is it any better than Honesty is the best policy — Hope is the anchor of the soul — All is not gold that glitters, "in which lies the essence of whole volumes"? But put some of these proverbs into verse and see what a different effect they have. For example: —

> "Virtue is the highest blessing;
> All that glitters is not gold;
> Evermore be onward pressing;
> Oh be bold — but not too bold.

"Not unto the swift the race is,
Nor the battle to the strong;
Dear to man are commonplaces;
Life is short and art is long.

"Up then when the morning 's pearly,
Water every feeble germ;
'T is the bird that rises early
That alone secures the worm."

Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

B. Go on, go on!

M. No, that is quite enough; one might "go on forever" as Tennyson's "Brook" says, — only,

"Spake full well in ages olden
One of the Teutonic race,
Speech is silvern — silence golden;
Everything should have its place.

"Least said is the soonest mended;
We must give as we would take;
And the bow too rudely bended,
In the end is sure to break."

B. Such noble sentiments in such noble verse, ought to be popular.

M. I anticipate immortality from them. Are they not moral, are they not wise — are they not intelligible to the meanest intellect — are they not apples of gold in plates of silver?

"Ever place life's golden apples
Upon Fortune's silver plate;
Victory crowns the soul that grapples
Sternly in the toils of Fate."

B. I don't see how the last two lines are a *sequitur* to the first two.

M. Oh! If you demand meaning, I give it up. The poet is not to be judged by such low rules. He is above meaning. I will rhyme no more for you. So long as you praised me it was all very well, but no true poet is ready to accept blame or criticism. You ask for meaning; I do not see the absolute necessity of having any meaning. For instance, are you not always affected by the allusion to little birds going to their nests at night? Does not many a poet, and prose writer too, for the matter of that, speak with perfect seriousness of this, as if it were a fact? Whenever night comes on and twilight draws her "gradual dusky veil" over the world, are you not pretty sure that the little birds will be going to their nests, in half the poems descriptive of twilight? Every one who thinks for a moment, knows, of course, that birds do not live in nests, save female birds, while they are hatching their young, and then that they do not go there solely at night, but remain there all day. Yet, by poetic license they always have a nest for their home at night. The truth is, that people do not think. "Thinking is nothing but a waste of thought," as one of the Smiths writes in "Rejected Addresses."

B. And "Nought is everything, and everything is nought." Do not leave out the following line which so grandly completes the couplet. Do you remember those famous lines in Dryden's "Indian Emperor" that all the world used to admire and quote as exquisite? What you were saying about

the birds reminded me of them. Listen, and say if anything could be more senseless and incorrect. Cortez appears "alone in a night-gown" and thus describes night: —

> "All things are hushed as nature's self lay dead,
> The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head,
> The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
> And sleeping flowers beneath the night-dew sweat.
> Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
> Rest to my soul and slumber to my eyes."

Can anything be more false and unnatural than this?

M. It is not much worse than Pope's translation of the night-scene in the Trojan camp, in which he has turned the simple Homeric description into absurdity, distorting every image, and setting it to an artificial see-saw of verse. Yet these lines are even now quoted with approbation as a description of nature.

B. No one can deny that these were remarkable men. How was it that they could so stultify their minds and their senses?

M. Because they aimed not at Truth or Nature, but at a sort of vague Will-o'-wisp called Poetry, which demanded to be clothed in fantastic and far-fetched imagery; and they thought to obtain this by adopting an artificial diction removed from common usage. They could speak with great directness and vigor when they chose, and their satire bites with sharp enough teeth. Look at Pope's attack on Addison, when he was thoroughly and bitterly in earnest. There is no lack of sav-

age directness there, in language or images. Or read, for instance, Dryden's noble essay on Dramatic Poetry, and especially those passages in which he speaks of Shakespeare. There is no more vigorous piece of English in our language. Yet Dryden, bombastic and unnatural as he himself could be at times, can vituperate soundly the bombast and swelling hyperbole of others. In the dedicatory epistle to the "Spanish Friar," he thus condemns the "Bussy d'Ambois" of Chapman: —

"I have sometimes wondered in the reading what was become of these glaring colors which amazed me in 'Bussy d'Ambois' upon the theatre, but when I had taken up what I supposed a fallen star, I found I had been cozened with a jelly; nothing but a cold dull mass, which glittered no longer than it was shooting; a dwarfish thought dressed up in gigantic words, repetition in abundance, looseness of expression and gross hyperboles; the sense of one line expanded prodigiously into ten; and to sum up all, uncorrect English, and a hideous mingle of false poetry and true nonsense; or, at best, a scantling of wit, which lay gasping for life, and groaning beneath a heap of rubbish."

B. And this was in the dedicatory epistle to the "Spanish Friar," which is one of the most bombastic plays Dryden ever wrote. Had he been describing some of his own work, he could not have done it better. But this shows how blind we

are to our own faults, and how lynx-eyed to the faults of others.

M. When Dryden wrote prose he was strong, nervous, and pointed. So, too, when he wrote satire in verse he spoke directly and to the purpose. But when he trod the higher levels of poetry, and attempted the ideal or the dramatic, he constantly fell into bombast and nonsense; not always, indeed, for there are scenes in his dramas which are striking — as, for instance, that between Aufidius and Antony, in which he strove to imitate Shakespeare's scene between Brutus and Cassius; and the play in which this occurs Dryden tells us, in his essay on Poetry and Painting, is the only one he ever wrote for himself.

B. It is certainly a striking scene — but how inferior to Shakespeare's!

M. Yet nobody has spoken in a more noble manner of Shakespeare: "If Shakespeare were stripped of all the bombasts in his passions" (he says in the Preface to "Troilus and Cressida"), "and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remain. If his embroideries were burnt down there still would be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot; but I fear (at least let me fear it for myself) that they who ape his sounding words have nothing of his thought, but are all outside. There is not so much as a dwarf within one giant's clothes."

B. Yet, if I remember right, he has in his adaptation of "Troilus and Cressida" cut out all

that magnificent dialogue between Ulysses and Achilles, and has besides so hacked and spoiled the play that it is scarcely recognizable; as for his substitutions and insertions, nothing could be worse. But in his adaptation of the "Tempest" he has shown even less judgment and poetic sensibility. It requires all one's patience to read it.

M. You must not lay all that to Dryden's door. The adaptation of the "Tempest" was chiefly Davenant's work.

B. Ay, but Dryden abetted him; and I am not sure if all the embroideries of both were burnt down there would be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot.

M. You must judge Dryden by the taste of his age, as you judge every second-rate man. It is only first-rate men that lead their age. But listen to what he says of Shakespeare: "He was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously but luckily: when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature: he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike: were he so, I should do him injustice to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flatly insipid: his comic wit degen-

erating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him. No man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit and did not raise himself as high above the rest of poets, —

'Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.'"

That is what I call good strong English.

B. It is indeed.

M. Listen again to what he says of Ben Jonson: "He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them. There is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in 'Sejanus' and 'Catiline.' But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch, and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him." But he could rail as well as he could praise. Witness his attack on Little's play, "The Empress of Morocco," which is as bitter and biting as satire can be. He takes the poor author up as a mastiff would a cur, and shakes the very life out of him. "This upstart literary scribbler," he says, "who lies more open to censure than any writer of the age, comes among the poets like one of the earth-born brethren, and his first business in the world is to attack and murder all his fellows. This, I confess, raised a little indignation in me, as much as I was capable of, for so contemptible

a wretch, and made me think it somewhat necessary that he should be made an example to the discouragement of all such petulant ill-writers, and that he should be dragged out of the obscurity to which his own poetry would have forever condemned him. I knew, indeed, that to write against him was to do him too great an honor; but I considered Ben Jonson had done it before to Dekker," etc.; and with this prologue to battle he begins, and tears his adversary to pieces.

B. I like this less than the praise. Little would have perished without all this savagery; and, vigorous as it is, it would have been better unsaid.

M. At all events, it is not weak, bombastic, or artificial, as much in his dramas is. But poetry in his day was already in the decline, while prose was still in the strength of its manhood. Afterwards poetry made an alliance with nonsense, exiling sense from its domains, and welcoming, in its stead, gilded furious feebleness and swelling distortion. England has many great examples of bombast and artificiality of diction, but I doubt if she can show a single author who in these qualities is superior to the American poet (God save the mark!), Robert Treat Paine, who wrote at the beginning of this century. His bombast and artificiality surpass everything in literature. And yet he was famous in his day, and his contemporaries placed him in the front rank as a poet. Listen to this passage in his poem on the "Invention of

Letters," where he is celebrating the virtues of Washington: —

> "Could Faustus live, by gloomy grave resigned,
> With power extensive as sublime his mind,
> Thy glorious life a volume should compose
> As Alps immortal, spotless as its snows;
> The stars should be its types, its press the age,
> The earth its binding, and the sky its page."

B. Magnificent! Absurdity, or, to use Dryden's words, "the rumbling of robustious nonsense," can truly go no further.

M. Listen, too, to what his biographer calls "the following nervous lines" in his famous poem of "The Ruling Passion:" —

> "Yet such there are, whose smooth perfidious smile
> Might cheat the tempting crocodile in guile.
> May screaming night-fiends, hot in recreant gore,
> Rive their strained fibres to their heart's rank core
> Till startled conscience heap in wild dismay
> Convulsive curses on the source of day."

Is not that a pretty periphrasis?

B. Amazing! nervous indeed!

M. I must give you one other touch of this stupendous poet. He was the author of the most famous political song of his time, entitled "Adams and Liberty," which was sung everywhere in America with the utmost enthusiasm, to the air now known as the "Star-Spangled Banner," and thought to be a wonderful production of genius. Wonderful indeed it is, though not exactly in the same sense. But let me read you the account of one of the verses of this song, as given by his biog-

rapher. "There was," he says, "never a political song more sung in America than this; and one of more poetical merit was, perhaps, never written. An anecdote deserves notice respecting one of the best stanzas in it. Mr. Paine had written all he intended, and, being in the house of Major Russell, the editor of the 'Centinel,' showed him the verses. It was highly approved, but pronounced imperfect, as Washington was omitted. The sideboard was replenished, and Paine was about to help himself, when Major Russell familiarly interfered, and insisted in his humorous manner that he should not slake his thirst till he had written an additional stanza, in which Washington should be introduced. Paine marched back and forth for a few minutes, and *suddenly starting*, called for a pen. He immediately wrote the following sublime stanza, afterwards making one or two trivial verbal amendments: " —

"Should the tempest of war overshadow our land,
Its bolts ne'er could rend Freedom's temple asunder;
For unmoved at its portal would Washington stand,
And repulse with his breast the assaults of the thunder.
His sword from the sleep
Of his scabbard would leap,
And conduct, with its point, every flash to the deep.
For ne'er shall the sons," etc.

B. Bravo, Paine! what an image! what a picture! He must have been a wonderful man! How is it that he is not known throughout the world?

M. "The world knows nothing of its greatest men," and ungratefully has suffered him and his works to pass away into oblivion.

B. It certainly is clear, when such verses are written and admired, that neither poet nor public can think it worth while to exercise their common sense, and that there is some charm quite beyond any intelligible meaning that they must have. But it comes back to what we were saying. For the most part, people do not think at all. They like what they are taught to like; they believe what they are taught to believe. They learn certain phrases and formulas, and these stand in their minds for thought and opinion. How many, do you suppose, of those who go to church, have ever asked themselves the real meaning of the words they repeat in the Liturgy and the Creed? how many of them who profess to believe in the communion of saints and the resurrection of the body could explain clearly to you what these phrases meant? How many attach any sort of significance to their loud affirmation that Christ descended into hell? I do not at all intend to indicate that these phrases have no meaning; all I mean to say is, that I believe very few of those who repeat them ever have fixed their minds upon them to ascertain their meaning, and that to most persons they have only a vague, shadowy, and general meaning, but no definite and clear significance. Yet surely, if they can think, ought they not to ponder well the weight of every word in so vital a matter as religious creed?

M. Your remark is quite as applicable to the Commandments, which are set up in golden letters

in our churches. Is it possible that people generally believe these commandments to be authoritative? If so, how is it that they so directly disobey them? Have they ever thought what they are, and what they mean, what they forbid, and what they inculcate? I fear not. I, at least, have found very few who seem to have thought about them at all. Take the second commandment, for instance: Thou shalt not make any graven image, etc., or any likeness of anything, etc., thou shalt not bow down and worship it." Does anybody ever stop to think that this a clear and absolute prohibition of all Art, so far as it relates at least to the representation of human or living beings; and that it was so intended, and understood, and obeyed by the Jews to whom it was given? How is it possible for persons who devote themselves to the practice of Art to accept such a commandment, and put it up in their churches, and repeat it in their services? It is plain that they have never taken the trouble to try to understand what it means. Probably they have never asked themselves the question.

B. They would answer you by saying that this commandment is only a prohibition of idolatry — that you are only forbidden to bow down and worship images, and not forbidden to make them.

M. I know they would; but this is utterly untrue. The commandment is clear and direct. It orders you not to make graven images, etc., and then afterwards not to worship them. ' The ancient

Jews, to whom this commandment was given, so understood it. They were prohibited from making graven images and likenesses of any living thing; and the consequence was, that they never made them. Nowhere are to be found in all the Jewish remains of antiquity any vestiges of such images and likenesses, — no statues, no pictures, no portraits, no representations of man or beast, or bird, or fish, — save in certain excepted cases, allowed later specially by commandment of law, as in the cherubim and seraphim on the high altar.

B. But to this it will be answered that, granting this, the prohibition was made with the ultimate object of preventing idolatry of images; that, if we do not worship the images, we do not break the commandment; and, at all events, that this is the meaning we at present attach to it.

M. But this is a perfectly absurd statement. In the first place, we have no right to interpret or limit the meaning of any law or commandment by our own wishes, when the language is not only clear and definite, but when our interpretation and limitation is entirely contrary to the words, and contrary to the meaning as recognized by the nation to whom this commandment was given. In the next place, the argument put forward that, inasmuch as the prevention of idolatry was the ultimate object of the law, no one breaks the commandment or law unless he is guilty of worshiping the images he makes, is perfectly untenable. Such a plea would not be admitted in any court

of law for a moment. For instance, by the English law or commandment (there is no mystery about the word — commandment and law are the same thing) publicans are prohibited to sell spirituous liquors, or to keep open their houses beyond certain hours, and on certain days. The reason which prompted this law is the prevention of drunkenness. Suppose, then, that a publican violates the commandment of the law by keeping his house open, and selling his liquors at prohibited times, and in consequence, is brought up to answer for this before a magistrate. What would the court, or any one else, say to a plea on his part that he had not broken the law, and was not liable to the penalty, because no one had got drunk on the wine or liquor he had sold; and as that was the motive for passing such a law, he could not be made responsible without proving that drunkenness had ensued. Yet this is the plea that is set forward as to the second commandment. If the churches of to-day mean to prohibit only idolatry, let them say so clearly; but don't let them print up this commandment, which not only prohibits idolatry, but the making of all graven images and likenesses. I can quite understand that Jews should hold to these commandments, but why should Christians do so? One would think, to see them set up in golden letters in our churches, and made a formal part of the Communion Service, that we were in so far at least Jews. But do we believe the statements contained in these commandments,

or can even the minority of those who so solemnly affirm them ever take the trouble to think what they mean? Do they, for instance, believe that God is a jealous God, — jealous of other gods — "visiting the sins of the father upon the children to the third and fourth generation"? Do they ever stop to ponder the meaning of the words "The Lord *thy* God"? Have they ever carefully read the Books of Moses, and especially Exodus and Deuteronomy, to ascertain what they mean? Do they know, or have they ever thought, that the God of the commandments and of Moses was the special God of the Jews ("The Lord God of the Hebrews"), and not the universal God whom we recognize; and that He is to be distinguished from "other gods whom they shall not have *before* me," — that they are ordered to worship him because "thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself," and prohibited from going after "other gods and the gods of the people that are around you (for the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the Lord thy God is turned against thee, and destroy thee off the face of the earth;" and that these injunctions are solely given to the Jews, and they are threatened that "if thou forget the Lord *thy* God, and walk after other gods and serve them, and worship them, thou shalt surely perish"? If the "Lord thy God" was the universal God, how could Joshua say to the tribes at Shechem, "If it

seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." Remember, too, the contest between Moses and the magicians, and Jehovah and Baal, as to which was the most powerful.

B. Of course they never ask themselves such questions, and never dream of such interpretations. They understand the commandment merely to mean that they are to worship God, and not give themselves to idolatry.

M. But this commandment means and says a great deal more, and I cannot understand how they can intelligently read the words alone, without being aware of this. But to go on with a few more questions, which I ask in any rather than a scoffing spirit. In respect to this question of graven images, if people took the trouble to read Deuteronomy and Exodus with care, they would see that they are ordered over, and over, and over again by Moses, or God speaking through Moses, and in the most solemn and absolute terms, not to make "graven images, or the likeness of anything," as, for instance, "Neither shalt thou make any graven image; which the Lord thy God hateth;" and again, "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image; an abomination unto the Lord, the work of any craftsman." In these and other cases, the prohibition is clear and direct, and not mixed up with other immediate

clauses as to idolatry. And, besides, historically the prohibition is beyond question. Josephus himself tells us of a riot occasioned in Jerusalem by the entrance of Roman legions, simply because they had these graven images on their standards, which was an offense against the Jewish law.

B. I wish they would add to the tenth commandment the Jewish one given in the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."

M. Ah, that indeed! and also add to the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," the additional clause in Leviticus, "neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another."

B. Some of these commandments are, to say the least, very odd. For instance, it is prohibited to the Jews "to eat anything that dieth of itself," "but," it goes on, "thou shalt give it to the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it, or thou mayst sell it unto an alien, for thou art a holy people unto the Lord *thy* God." It was their fixed idea, which is shown in all their commandments and usages, that they were a special people, and that their God was a special God. But what do you make out of "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land," — what does this latter clause mean?

M. It means simply to refer to the Jewish law given in Exodus and Leviticus, that "He who curseth" ("smiteth" it stands in Exodus) "his father or his mother shall be surely put to death."

It is to avoid this penalty that we are ordered to honor our father and mother. And this leads me to another point, which is this: there is no recognition throughout the commandments of immortality, or of a future state of rewards and punishments; nor is there, for the matter of that, any such recognition throughout the laws of Moses, of which they are a part. The rewards and punishments all refer to this life. If the Jews keep the commandments, they are promised that their days, and the days of their children, shall be long upon earth; that they shall have all worldly prosperity and riches, and shall prevail over their enemies. Whereas, on the contrary, if they disobey them, curses are invoked on their heads, upon their fields, upon their cattle, upon their wars, and they are threatened with all sort of diseases — fevers, consumption, botch, emerods, scab, itch, and every kind of horrible thing on this earth: but there is never a word of anything beyond this life.

B. Is this really so?

M. Read the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, if you don't believe me. Again, take the fourth commandment. Do Christians really believe that they are bound to keep the Jewish Sabbath as they are here ordered, and, for the reasons here given, that it is not permitted to them to do any work of any kind; neither they, nor their children, nor their cattle, nor their servants, nor the stranger that is within their gates? If so, why do they violate it systematically? If they do not ad-

mit it as law, why do they give it a prominent place in their churches, and repeat it in their services as obligatory? Do they really think God worked six days, and rested on the seventh, and for that reason they should do the same? or how do they interpret it? If it do not mean six days, but six cycles, why is this a reason for keeping the seventh day? Why, also, do they not keep the Sabbath of the seventh year, enjoined by the ancient Jewish law of the same period, and for that year give entire and fallow rest to all the land; and neither sow their fields, nor prune their vines, nor gather their grapes, and also make a release of debts to all creditors; and why do they not keep the jubilee of the seven times seventh year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land on the fiftieth year, and perform all the ordinances of this commandment also? Undoubtedly it is quite as authoritative as the commandment in regard to the Sabbath-day; for, as you remember, this law commences, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, on Mount Sinai, saying."

B. It must have been rather inconvenient to release all one's creditors on the seventh year, and not to sow anything.

M. It was all arranged by the law — for the question of the Jews, "What shall we eat the seventh year?" is anticipated and answered: "I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years, and ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of old fruit

until the ninth year; until the fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store." If we believe in the seventh day, why not in the commandment as to the seventh year?

B. Don't ask me. I'm sure of nothing, except that people don't think. But this reminds me of a question which I have often asked, and never have found a satisfactory answer. In the marriage service occurs this phrase: "With this ring I thee wed, and *with all my worldly goods I thee endow.*" This is a plain, clear, absolute parol conveyance at least of all personal property, formally made before witnesses, in the presence of a magistrate, or priest acting *quo ad hoc* as a magistrate, and which in any other case and under ordinary circumstances would constitute a solemn contract binding the party who makes it. The consideration of marriage is sufficient to support it; and can any one give me any reason against maintaining it to be an absolute deed of gift?

M. I don't know of any, except that nobody in using these words means anything by them. They are mere words, like many formulas that we employ to which we attach no definite meaning.

B. Well, after all it does not matter much.

M. Ah! in some questions it matters a good deal. For instance, in some questions, as those of religion, it is not permissible for men not to think, and deeply consider what they profess to believe.

B. Too much thinking might lead to unbelief,

since we cannot satisfactorily solve anything if we begin to inquire too curiously into it. It is better, therefore, to accept a ready-made creed, established and recognized by fifty generations of men — for which heroes have died and martyrs have gone to the stake — than to vamp a new one out of our own individual ideas. At all events, it is easier to drop anchor in the Church's port than to war with the winds and waves of controversy, and expose ourselves to the dangers of heresy or atheism. Why should I set up my opinion against the mass of authority? I like the Roman Church because it takes all the trouble of thinking off my mind. It thinks for me, and tells me what to believe. I accept it, and am perfectly happy.

M. So you think it is best to go on repeating a creed or formula of words, the meaning of which you do not take the trouble to investigate. You say this merely out of paradox.

B. Let us leave out the question of religion — which we shall not probably agree upon. My notion is that it is best to allow others to have their own way and their own belief. I do not know that I am absolutely infallible, and I find it quite enough to do my own duty. Live and let live is my motto. Think and let think!

M. With such principles we should never have had a Reformation, a Protestant Church, nay, not even a Christian Church. If you had been born a pagan, you would have accepted the creed of your neighbors, and explored, if you had the good

luck to be made an augur, the entrails of beasts to divine the future.

B. Cicero did this.

M. I know he did, and it never ceases to amaze me.

B. He was too wise to oppose the whole current of belief in his age; and besides, his thought undoubtedly was colored by his early religious impressions, by the scenes in the temples, by the repetitions of formulas, by the sacrifices to the gods, and the invocations of the priests, as the thought and feelings of every man still are by the lessons and dogmas and formalities that were impressed upon his mind before he began to think and question. Besides, it is easier not to think; easier to run in the old rut than to make new paths. It saves a world of bother. And the power of words and formulas is mighty. They have always been wondrous in their effect, and the world has always believed in them — and always will. You are surprised that Cicero should gravely have performed the duties of an augur: what will you say then to Marcus Portius Cato, who believed that sprains could be cured by a formula of incantation, and seriously recommends it as a sovereign remedy? "Take," he says, "a reed of about four or five feet in length, split it in the middle, and let two men hold each end on a line with their thighs. Then let one say these words as they move towards each other, *Motas vaeta daries, dardaries astataries dissunapiter.* At the point where

they meet and touch each other let the reed be cut in halves, with a sword held in the left and right hand of each, and if this be bound on to the fracture or dislocation it will be healed. Every day an incantation must be sung in these words, *Huat Hanat Huat ista pista sista domiabo damnaustra.* These are the words, if I recollect them right; though, as they appear differently in different editions, I am not sure how they run exactly.

Marcus Portius Cato was not peculiar in this belief. The virtue of incantations was universally recognized. Homer, in the Nineteenth book of the Odyssey, says that when Ulysses was wounded in the knee by a wild boar, the sons of Autolycus stopped the black blood by a spell; but he does not tell us what the spell was. In the Tabulæ Decemvirales, also, there were laws prohibiting incantations to draw away harvests from the fields —*ne pelliciunto alienas segetes excantando ne incantando ne agrum defraudanto.* But this is nothing. Tibullus, Lucan, Ovid, and others make a maga pluck the stars out of the sky and change the course of a river by words of incantation. So, too, among the ancient Jews, charms and incantations were employed to cure diseases, cast out demons, dispel evil influences, and avert enchantments; and numerous forms of spells and charms are given in the Talmud to preserve those who use or wear them against the malignity of demons, and the terrors of the Evil One. Solomon himself is said by the Talmud to have been instructed in

the arts of magic by the demons Asa and Asael, and to have composed the most powerful of spells and exorcisms, and even by means of them to have compelled the aid of demons in the building of the Temple itself.

M. I remember in the Arabian Nights the terrible Djinn that was imprisoned in a vase sealed with the signet of Solomon, and that rose out of the vase when the seal was broken by the fisherman, and towered aloft like a vast cloud — a horrible and mighty figure that appalled my boyish imaginations. Of course I believe all this, for I read it when I was a child; but building the Temple by the aid of demons is rather strong.

B. Ay, and the story told about it in the Talmud is a very curious one. Solomon desired to have the assistance of the worm Schamir, but not knowing where to find him, conjured up two devils, who informed him that he was in the power of the Prince of the Seas, and gave him instructions how to secure him. Solomon obeyed the instructions, secured Schamir, and by his assistance built the Temple.

M. "'T is a strange serpent," as Lepidus says.

B. Ay, and as the clown says of the asp, "The worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping of wise people." But who shall say after such stories as these that there is no power in words? On the contrary they are, and always have been, a mighty power, and it is not necessary they should have any definite meaning. The more unintelligible

they are the better. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico* is the true rule — *Credo quia impossibile.* There is a mystery about the unknown and the impossible which the known and the possible cannot have. I dare say some of our old calls were originally incantations of great power, but now are fallen in the world's estate, and used ignorantly by boys.

M. Do you remember any more of those old jingles that we counted out with when we were boys?

B. Yes, several; here's one: —

"Shu, shu, shulailu,
Shulai, shulai, shillaballa ku.
First time I saw her shillaballa eel,
Dis cum bibbololla blu slo reel."

And here's another: —

"Hoky poky wangery fum
Polevee kee ky bulum kum,
Wungery fungery wingery wum,
King of the Cannibal Islands."

M. They carry me back to my early days. Do you remember this very common one? —

"Onery youery ickery Ann,
Phillissy phollisy Nicholas John,
Queeby quauby Irish Mary
Buck."

B. Yes; that was one the girls used to say. But the boys had a variation and development of it. And here is another which you will remember: —

"One a zoll, zeu a zoll, zig a zoll zan,
Bob-tail, vinegar, tittle tol tan.
Harum-scarum, virgin marum
Blindfold."

M. That last is a queer mixture. The first part seems a corruption from the Dutch, and the latter part to be Catholic. And this reminds me of a curious book, published in 1834, and written by Mr. John Bellenden Ker, in which the author seeks to prove that many of the popular phrases now in common use, as well as the English nursery rhymes and nonsense-verses we learn as children, are merely corruptions of Low Dutch poems, epigrams, and proverbs, which in the original he supposes to have had in many cases a purely political significance, and which have assumed their English form by imitation of their sound in the original without regard to the sense. His book is an elaborate attempt to prove this proposition by translating these verses and phrases back into Low Dutch merely through their sound; and in doing this he shows a remarkable though extraordinarily misplaced ingenuity. For instance — let me get the book and read you one or two, and you will judge for yourself. Here is the sailor's phrase, "He has gone to Davy's locker," which he translates *Hij is gaen tot Eewighs! luck er!* "He is gone into eternity! May happiness attend him there — luck to him." Again, "Head over heels" he translates into *Heet over ijls* "to be vehement beyond proper haste." "Tit for tat" is *Dit for*

dat, This for that. These do indeed seem to have a certain correspondence; but what do you make of this? "To die in one's shoes" — meaning to come to the gallows — which he translates, *T'u d' haeye in wan sjvws;* that is, "When you have caught the shark it is of no use to you, — implying a bad job, a hard pull, and nothing caught but carrion." This last is the general character of the translations into Dutch, excessively curious and ingenious, and equally absurd. But the nursery rhymes are still more ingenious. For instance, —

"Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle —
The cow jumped over the moon," —

becomes, —

"Hye, died t'el, died t'el
De guit end de vied t'el
De Kauw j'hummt; Hoeve eer; dij moê aen',
De lij t'el doghe laft tot sij sus sport;
Hou yl te dies: 'Ran! haft er dij spaê aen.'"

The meaning of which is, Mr. Ker says: "You that work hard for your bread, do contrive among yourselves to shame the thief and the mischief-maker. This jackdaw (priest) keeps on repeating, 'Plough the land duly; be painstaking, my man;' and this curse to every virtue continues harping on in the same strain till he is stopped short. Be sure you salute him at once with 'My active fellow, take you this spade and get your own bread with it honestly, and don't filch from others.'"

And here is one more of —

"Little Bopeep has lost his sheep,
And cannot tell where to find them;
Let him alone, they 'll all come home,
And bring their tails behind them."

This would seem intelligible nonsense enough in the English; but he makes of it this Low Dutch rhyme: —

"Littel Boô-piep hys lost is suijpe
End gaen na't til weêr te vand om;
Laet hin al hone! t'heel kom hou' em,
End beringh teer te els behandt om."

"Little Boopeep,[1] his food and delight are drink. It is this love of the cup which has invited him again to go out on a fresh visit — keep to yourselves all reproaches on this head! The whole of you come and do him honor, and form a circle round him. Provision has been procured, and will be offered to all of us." I think these will do as specimens. Many of the nursery rhymes, he seems to think, are satires against the priests, and among them are those I have read.

B. A more amazing perversion of talent and ingenuity I never knew.

M. Are not these nonsense or baby rhymes intelligible enough as they stand? — many of them charming in their rhythm: some full of grace and freedom of flow; and some essentially songs made to be sung; as, for instance, —

"Little Bopeep has lost his sheep;"

or —

"Hush-a-bye baby on the tree-top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock;

[1] "Boopeep" is the Limitour — the begging friar.

When the bough breaks the cradle will fall,
And down 'll come baby, cradle and all."

Or that striking and mysterious one of the Beggars: —

"Hark! hark! the dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town,
Some in rags and some in jags,
And some in velvet gowns."

B. Or this, which has a grand rhythm: —

"London Bridge is broken down,
Dance over, my Lady Lee;
London Bridge is broken down,
And a gay ladie."

Or —

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
Silver bells and cockle-shells,
And fair maids all in a row."

One can sing any of these. In fact, one cannot help singing them — they carry their music with them.

M. Much of their charm, I doubt not, comes from old associations; but still there is a charm about them beyond all this, otherwise they would not have lasted so long and delighted so many children.

B. There is nothing more difficult than to write a good song. It requires a lightness and delicacy of touch which are rare. It must be musical in its flow, open voweled, and, as it were, born in a moment, and not produced by patient elaboration. Some of Shakespeare's songs are exquisite — light as a breath, yet full of feeling and grace. Herrick

also wrote charming songs, — easy and careless, and with a sort of wayward grace, — as, for instance, his night-piece to Julia, beginning, —

"Her eyes the glowworm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like sparks of fire befriend thee," etc.

Or —

"Gather you rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying,
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying;"

which one cannot help singing; or,

"Goe, happy Rose, and interwove
With other flowers bind my love —
Tell her that she must not be
Longer flowing, longer free,
That so oft hath fettered me," etc.

Or —

"Faire daffodills, we weep to see,
You haste away so soon," etc.

M. Some of the songs of Sir Thomas Wyatt have a certain manly character about them which pleases me, and so have Lovelace's and Waller's, and Carew's and Wither's. Ben Jonson always seems formal and stiff in his songs; and even his "Drink to me only with thine eyes" is far fetched, and has not the easy grace and naturalness of the others. Herrick, however, seems to me the freshest of all the song-writers of his period, and his song to Anthea, who may command him anything, is delightful.

B. I don't agree with you about "Drink to me only." It seems to me a charming song. No Bacchanalism could be more refined. Indeed, a friend of mine once heard it sung at a great temperance and teetotal celebration. It may be far fetched, as you say, in its images, but it is so familiar to my mind, so associated with old memories, and so closely wedded to the delightful music to which we always sing it, that I cannot judge of it as if I heard of it for the first time.

M. Ah, yes! that is true; one cannot separate the music and the words of a song. They become finally one in the mind.

B. In our minds who hear them, though sometimes the poet is jealous of the composer. And there are cases when it is "hard lines" for the poet. For instance, it is by no means easy to write a good libretto for an opera; but, good or bad, no one ever asks or cares who wrote it, so utterly lost is it in the music.

M. Probably because all librettos are so execrable. But this, by the way, reminds me of our friend L——, who has a pretty taste for music, and wrote airs for several of T——'s songs. One evening he was singing one of these songs to some friends, and T—— himself was among them. In the midst of it he was interrupted by the poet, who cried out, "Stop, stop! you have not got that line right." "Who the deuce cares for the words?" retorted the singer; "it is only the music that any one cares for."

B. I am afraid he was nearly right. If not, how is it that we can listen to such rubbish as the general run of songs are without the music? And even when we have the best, we cannot help feeling the music more than the words. Really, to enjoy the poetry of a song, one should read it to an ideal melody of its own — a phantasm or dream of music in the mind — and not hear it actually sung.

M. There are some songs which read very well and sing very badly. No song sings well unless it is open-voweled, and has the rhythmic stress on the vowels. Tennyson's songs, for instance, are not generally adapted to music. They are too consonanted and too alliterative, and the weight of the measure is on the consonants. They are harmonies, not melodies, of words. Take, for instance, "Claribel," which he calls "a melody": —

> "Where Claribel low lieth
> The breezes pause and die,
> Letting the rose-leaves fall:
> But the solemn oak-tree sigheth
> Thick-leaved, ambrosial," etc.

It would not be possible to sing this. A poem may be very beautiful, and not fit to be sung. It may be very poor as a poem, and very singable. Some of Tennyson's songs are really singable, — as, for instance, "Sweet and low."

B. Of late song-writers Burns had the truest and most natural gift. Some of his songs are delightful. What could be more sweet and natural than the "Ae fond kiss, and then we sever"?

"I'll not blame my partial fancy,
Nothing could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love forever."

Or these pathetic lines, —

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly;
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Or the whole song to "Mary Morrison," or "My love is like the red, red rose," or a dozen others. But he is quite as happy in his other veins — as in "Scots wha hae," or "Duncan Gray."

M. What do you say of Shelley's songs?

B. Some of them are exquisite, and sing themselves. What can be more charming than "One word is too often profaned," or "Swifter far than summer's flight," or "When the lamp is shattered," or "Wilt thou forget the happy hours?" or "As the moon's soft splendor," or "Oh world, oh life, oh time!" or "Music when soft voices die;" or last, those lines to an Indian air, — "I arise from dreams of thee"? And, by the way, do you know the Indian air to which these lines were written?

M. Very well; and the words are admirably adapted to it. The air is low, languid, and a little monotonous in its movements, but of a tender, dreamy character, like the flowing of a stream by moonlight. No wonder Shelley was impressed by it. I remember being shown many years ago, at the Baths at Lucca, the original MS. of this song,

in Shelley's handwriting. It was then in the possession of Colonel Stisted, and, according to his account, was taken from the pocket-book which was in Shelley's breast-pocket at the time he was drowned off Lerici. The MS. was worn, stained, and somewhat obliterated by having been so long in the water; and not only from its being in the handwriting of Shelley, but from the circumstance of its being found on his body after death, had a very sad and peculiar interest.

B. That was an autograph worth possessing. Poor Shelley! what a delicate and refined nature he had — how full of pure aspiration, and how misunderstood! The world now does him justice — but too late to comfort him. Is it not strange that the public should have almost refused to listen to him while he lived — that they should have thrown aside and trampled in the dust these almost perfect little poems, while the most trivial verses of Byron were cherished and applauded, and went sounding through the world?

M. They judged him by his opinions, not by his poems. He was what they called an infidel, because he would not accept the dogmas of the Church. Yet where will you find higher aspirations towards all that is pure and exalted; more passionate longings for universal Love, Truth, and Justice; or a stronger insistence on all that is noble and refined in humanity?

B. But Byron was not a whit less of an infidel in their sense than Shelley; and yet they accepted

him, and did more than justice to his poems; and as for his life, it was anything but moral.

M. Shelley was too refined and spiritual in his poems for the age in which he lived. His muse had only wings, and not feet. It could soar into ideal heights, but it could not walk on the earth. Byron, on the contrary, appealed to the passions, the senses, and the sentimentality of the day, and hit the taste of that *Sturm und Drang* period. Besides he was Lord Byron, which was a power in itself. After all I cannot but think Brougham was right in his bitter criticism of his "Hours of Idleness." Is there in these poems anything above mediocrity? They give almost no promise of the power that he afterwards developed. Who could have dreamed that the same person who wrote them would afterwards write "Childe Harold," the "Pirate," "Lara," and the "Siege of Corinth"? The sting of Brougham's whip roused all that was dormant in his nature; and perhaps we owe to that bitter criticism the real awakening of his genius. It is quite possible that without this he might have droned on in the same strain all his life. But he woke up suddenly, and with a vengeance — and the world caught a Tartar indeed. Not, indeed, that I can see anything remarkable in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." It is very abusive; but with few exceptions its satire is as weak as it is violent and unjust.

B. How sweet and noble Shelley's character shows in contrast with that of his companion fel-

low-poet, Byron! The nature of the one was as coarse as that of the other was refined.

M. What always disgusted me in Byron is that he simulated vices which he did not really possess — at all events, to the degree he pretended. He thought it a fine thing to have the reputation of being a Don Juan. There was nothing high and earnest in him; and he was constantly posing for effect.

B. You will not deny that he was a great poet, notwithstanding.

M. He was a poet, certainly, and had remarkable genius, but with little culture and scholarly training. There is great energy in his writings, though it is often false and spasmodic, and he undoubtedly had, so to speak, great go; but he was careless in his language, and rarely wrote choice English. His epithets, for instance, are almost always poor and unselected, and his style is far from close and clean. It was, on the contrary, slipshod and swelling. As for his philosophy, it was very poor. But, despite all this, his novelty, intensity, and energy gave a power to his poetry which is undeniable; it stimulates you and carries you on with it so rapidly that you leap its defects. But there is nothing vexes me more than to hear foreigners couple his name and Shakespeare's together as the two great English poets. It plainly shows, what we were speaking of the other day, that it is impossible for a foreigner to feel those distinctions of style, and those sympathetic touches,

which are so plain to every cultivated Englishman. Even the most cultivated cannot feel as we do, who are to the manner born.

B. Some of his descriptions of nature are grand as well as beautiful; as, for instance, his description of summer on Lake Leman, and of the thunderstorm in the Alps.

M. That last is undoubtedly a grand passage, though deformed by a monstrous simile of mountains rejoicing on a young earthquake's birth. But —

> "From peak to peak the rattling crags among
> Leaps the live thunder," etc.,

is very fine.

B. Do you know any other description of a thunderstorm half as impressive?

M. Yes; one at least — very different in character, but at least equally fine. It occurs in a letter written by Shelley to Maria Gisborne, and is accurately true to nature and full of power. It is not a thunderstorm raging round the poet in the Alps, but coming on in the Apennines, seen from afar. The scenery is Italian, and not Swiss. I think I can remember the passage. It runs thus: —

> "The thunder-smoke
> Is gathering on the mountains like a cloak
> Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;
> The ripe corn under the undulating air
> Undulates like an ocean; and the vines
> Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines;
> The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill

The empty pauses of the blast; the hill
Looks hoary through the white electric rain;
And from the glens beyond in sullen strain
The interrupted thunder howls; above
One chasm of heaven smiles, like the eye of Love
On the unquiet world."

B. Very fine, and very true. What a sense of nature and truth! The *awakening* sea — the *hoary* hill — and more than all, the *white electric* rain! how true, how choice, and how new these epithets are! One seems to see and feel the whole landscape. The undulating corn — the wide, trembling vines — the interrupted thunder — the chasm of blue sky — the hoary hill — the thunder-smoke gathering on the mountains. How Italian, as you say, is the whole scene! Yes, that is indeed a wonderful picture by a great artist.

M. Let us have another thunderstorm by Browning, also very remarkable. It occurs in "Pippa Passes," when Sebald and Ottima are recalling a storm in the pine-forest: —

"Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burnt through the pine-tree roof. Here burnt and there
As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me; then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead."

Is not that very striking?

B. It is, indeed, a very remarkable passage. How admirably he uses the final alliteration in those words — bright white shaft burnt through

the pine-tree roof! It gives a quick, sudden vividness to the lightning. Then, too, the image of God's messenger plunging his weapon at a venture to find the guilty ones is also very poetic. But let me give you another by Browning, short and terse as Dante: —

> "In at heaven and out again
> Lightning! where it broke the roof
> Blood-like, some few drops of rain."

There!

M. That is very, very close, quick, and true. Shall we add one or two of the storms out of the "Tempest" and "King Lear"? Shall we give our face, like Lear's —

> "To be exposed against the warring winds?
> To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
> In the most terrible and nimble stroke
> Of quick, cross lightning?"

Or shall I, with Prospero, say I have —

> "Called forth the mutinous winds,
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
> Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt"?

B. On the whole, suppose we let it clear off now, and let the sun break forth, and sit down under the trees and begin again the songs that we were singing when these thunderstorms came on, and remember Wordsworth: —

> "There was a roaring in the wind all night,
> The rain came heavily and fell in floods.
> But now the sun is rising calm and bright;

The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the stock-dove broods;
The jay makes answer as the magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant sound of waters;
All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth."

M. Or let the storm pass, as it does in the Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven. Do you remember that wonderful passage when, after the roar and rattle of heaven's artillery, the soft wind-instruments breathe forth their pastoral airs, and nature smiles again, and the blue sky again broods over the world?

B. Ay, I remember it well, and wonderful it is. Well, let us sing then, since the storm has passed.

M. One moment more. Let us have two night-scenes first, of peace and beauty. Good poetry provokes repetition, — and first, Shelley's Italian night: —

"Unpavilioned heaven is fair;
Whether the Moon into her chamber gone,
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,
And the rare stars rush through them, dim and fast."

B. Charming!

M.

"I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
Built round dark caverns even to the root
Of the living stems who feed them, in whose bowers
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers.

Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
Trembles not in the slumbering air; and, borne
In circles quaint and ever changing dance,
Like wingèd stars the fire-flies flash and glance
Pale in the open moonshine, but each one
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
A meteor tamed, a fixed star gone astray
From the silver regions of the milky way.
Afar the contadino's song is heard,
Rude, but made sweet by distance, and a bird
Which cannot be a nightingale, and yet,
I know none else that sings so sweet as it
At this late hour: — and then all is still."

B. What sweet fancy, and what an eye for nature he had! Now, if you have it on your memory, give me Byron's night-scene on Lake Leman as a pendant, — "It is the hush of night."

M. I do not accurately remember it. Pray repeat it yourself.

B.

"It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen
Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep, and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.
He is an evening reveler who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment — then is still;
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy — for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into nature's breast the spirit of their hues."

M. I am sorry you did not stop with the "floating whisper on the hill." The latter lines are, excuse me, mere twaddle; and throughout these is a strange mixture of poetry and prose, of feeling and triviality, of carelessness and truth, which jars upon the mind. The epithets, too, are anything but felicitous in most cases. *Darkened* Jura, *capt* heights (capt with what?), living fragrance, (why living?) flowers fresh with childhood, starlight dews, — then darkened Jura's capt heights *appear precipitously* steep — *appear*, indeed — they *are* precipitously steep, or steeply precipitous, or precipitously precipitous. "Sings his fill," — how common! Then "on the ear drops the drip." And can there be anything more prosaic than to state of the floating whisper on the hill that it is "fancy"? By the grasshopper, I suppose, he means the "grillo" or cricket; and think of his chirp being a "carol," and a "good-night carol"!

B. Granted. *E pure si muove.* After all your criticisms, there is something in these verses which charms the ear and the sense, and gives you the feeling of night.

M. I admit it. But there is no precision of observation, no real truth to nature, no exact use of language or epithet, though there is a certain charm which one cannot but feel. Do you remember how Byron begins "Parisina"? —

> "It is the hour when from the boughs
> The nightingale's high note is heard."

It almost makes me think he never heard the

nightingale. "High note," indeed! Think of calling the nightingale's low, bubbling tones and liquid trills "high notes"! I know of no other poet who would have been so carelessly untrue. Imagine for a moment Shelley, or Wordsworth, or Keats, or Coleridge, or Tennyson, or Browning, applying such an epithet to the nightingale's song. Remember Coleridge's description in his charming poem to the nightingale.

B. Byron wrote almost nothing which can justly be called a song. They are all rather poems, and what used to be called stanzas; some of them are, however, singable, such as "When we two parted in silence and tears," of which the first four lines are the best, and "Though the day of my destiny 's over," or "Remind me not," which I like best of all, though it is less known and quoted than many. His "Hebrew Melodies" are not truly melodies or songs, but verses, though they have been set to music, and sing fairly well. Do you remember "Remind me not"? I will repeat the first two verses: —

"Remind me not, remind me not,
Of those beloved, those vanished hours,
When all my soul was given to thee —
Hours which shall never be forgot
Till time, and all these mortal powers,
And thou and I shall cease to be.

"Can I forget, can I forget,
When playing with thy golden hair,
How quick that fluttering heart would move?
No, by my soul, I see thee yet,

With eyes so languid, breast so fair,
And lips, though silent, breathing love."

This a song, and full of feeling, too, with nothing that is far-fetched and stilted.

M. I can match it with Shelley's —

"Wilt thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves instead of mould:
Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
And leaves the hopes that still remain?"

B. More sad and fanciful, but less passionate than Byron's.

M. What do you say to "There 's not a joy the world can give like what it takes away"?

B. It is all artificial, and I do not like it. Some of the images are frigid conceits, as bad at least as even Moore's worst. What can one think of such lines as these, —

"The heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears;
And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is when the ice appears"?

M. I think it is as bad as bad can be. Scott had a better sense of song, and some of his songs are very spirited, — such as his "Waken, lords and ladies gay," the "Pibroch of Donuil Dhu," or "A weary lot is thine, fair maid," — or his Coronach, "He is gone on the mountain, he is lost to the forest," or "Where shall the lover rest whom the fates sever?" So, too, Campbell gives us some sonorous and vigorous battle-songs, as "Ye Mariners of England" and "The Battle of the Baltic."

B. Can you recall anything like a song in all Wordsworth's poems?

M. No, I do not think he ever attempted to write a song; and, what is still more singular, there is scarcely a poem of his that breathes anything of the passion of personal love. His love seems to have been given to nature, not to persons. Yet there is one sonnet which forms an exception to this rule, and an exquisite poem it is, so full of feeling and pathos that it makes one regret that he did not do more in this vein. It is this: —

"Why art thou silent? is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre, that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant,
As would my deeds have been with hourly care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For naught but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak, though this soft, warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow,
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine. —
Speak! that these torturing doubts their end may know."

B. A beautiful sonnet, truly, but I think you do not repeat it right. The sixth line reads in my books, —

"Bound to thy service with unceasing care."

And in the fourth line I think also you have made a variation.

M. I repeat from memory, but I am sure, or pretty sure, that the sixth line used to read as

I spoke it. Wordsworth may have altered it in later editions, — and I think he did, — but I like the old line best.

B. It is lucky you are not printing this sonnet for the public, for the critics would be down upon you for this as an egregious blunder, and at once accuse you of ignorance of the author and of taking the whole at second-hand, or at least of being guilty of excessive and unpardonable carelessness. Luckily for you this is only a private conversation.

M. It is said that almost no one can repeat nineteen consecutive lines from memory with perfect exactness — without some trivial mistake, at least; and I believe this is true. I have heard it tried repeatedly, and with almost constant failure.

B. Probably the very nervousness created by the fear of failure troubles the memory, and creates hesitations and doubts.

M. A curious story was told me by one of Wordsworth's friends about this sonnet. It seems, according to my informant, that there was an old lady and friend of Wordsworth who lived near him, and just before St. Valentine's Day, some friends of his proposed to him, as a joke, that he should write her a valentine. He was amused by the proposition and consented, and this sonnet was the valentine he wrote.

B. It seems impossible, it is so tender and impassionate.

M. I tell the story as 't was told to me; I wish he had written her a valentine every year.

B. You were saying that this is the only poem of Wordsworth which breathes of passion and love. There is one other at least, is there not? — that entitled "Desideria," —

> "Surprised by joy, impatient as the wind,
> I turned to share the transport."

M. Yes, I allow that; and a beautiful sonnet it is, though more elaborate in diction in some places than I could wish. The lines, "That spot which no vicissitude could find," and "Even for the least division of an hour," are far from happy. Still it is a beautiful sonnet.

B. I was trying to recall anything like a song by Wordsworth, and this is the nearest approach to one that I remember. Whether song or not, it could be sung, I think, and it is a charming poem:

> "There is a change, and I am poor;
> Your love hath been, nor long ago,
> A fountain at my fond heart's door,
> Whose only business was to flow.
> And flow it did — not taking heed
> Of its own bounty or my need.
>
> "What happy moments did I count!
> Blest was I then all bliss above!
> Now, for that consecrated fount
> Of murmuring, sparkling, living love
> What have I? — shall I dare to tell?
> A comfortless and hidden well.
>
> "A well of love — it may be deep;
> I trust it is, and never dry;
> What matter? if the waters sleep
> In silence and obscurity.
> Such change, and at the very door
> Of my fond heart, hath made me poor."

Moore's songs sing well, and are married to such charming old Irish airs that they seem better than they are. Generally he is too artificial and strained in his imagery, but sometimes he strikes a note which is natural and happy, as in "Oft in the stilly night." The second line, "When slumber's chain has bound me," is bad, and so is "stilly;" but it goes on very sweetly: —

> "Fond memory brings the light
> Of other days around me,
> The smiles, the tears of boyhood's years,
> The words of love then spoken,
> The eyes that shone now dimmed and gone,
> The cheerful vows now broken."

And again —

> "When I remember all the friends once linked together
> I've seen around me fall, like leaves in wintry weather,
> I feel like one who treads alone
> Some banquet-hall deserted,
> Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
> And all but me departed."

M. Yes, that is charming, and the music to which it is set lends it an added grace; I cannot separate the air from the words. So, too, "I saw from the beach" has one verse which is very happy in its expression: —

> "Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of morning,
> Her clouds and her tears are worth evening's best light."

Now that I repeat it, it does not seem very charming after all, but with the music it certainly is, and so is "Love's Young Dream."

B. I should like to have heard him sing. His

voice, I am told, was weak and small, but he managed it with skill, and threw into his songs great expression, sentiment, and feeling.

M. Oh! the voice is nothing, or next to nothing, compared with that. I have heard many a beautiful voice which left me utterly cold, while I have been profoundly touched by others which, though little in themselves, had the art of winging the arrow straight to the heart. If the singer does not feel deeply, and lacks true expression, the best organ will not compensate for the deficiency. There is one celebrated singer who gives me no pleasure. She has a wonderful voice, perfectly trained, and endowed with extraordinary flexibility. I have no fault to find with her voice or execution, but it never touches me, and I hear it as I would a perfect piece of mechanism. There seems to be no soul in it. I do not care so much to hear any one sing, as the phrase is, like a bird. What I desire is to hear one sing like a human being, with expression, passion, and feeling, and out of the deeps of her nature. There must be a heart-beat in a voice, or it is a noise.

B. I know to whom you refer, but I differ from you, and you have the world against you. "My voice is my fortune, sir, she said." Her royal presents of jewelry are as numerous as a dentist's decorations. She coins notes with notes, and her execution is wonderfully rapid. She has the great seal of success upon her, and her popularity is unbounded.

M. I know, but I am nevertheless "convinced against my will, and of the same opinion still." What does popularity prove?

B. Present success, and that is all a singer needs and asks. It is not the meed which poets and artists desire solely, for their works look to the Future as well as the Present, and they can wait. At all events, with them immediate popularity is not a necessity as it is with an actor and a singer. But the actor's and singer's prosperity lies in the ear of those who hear him. His success is a flash of the present. There is no record left in the air of the voice, and the tones of the expression, and the action. It is not like a picture, or poem, or statue, which may live for centuries to enchant generations yet unborn — which, neglected or scorned to-day, may be recognized, loved, and enjoyed a hundred or a thousand years from now — which, dead to those who now see and hear, may spread hereafter into a large life, and delight nations. Swift popularity with poets and artists has generally a short life. Fame grows slowly; and the most popular poets and artists of to-day are often neglected and forgotten to-morrow. Cowley ran through seven editions, Norris of Bemerton through nine, Flatman through four, and Waller through five, in less time than Shakespeare and Milton through two. Yet scarcely even the names of any of these, except Cowley and Waller, are known now, while Shakespeare and Milton shine like great planets in the firmament of literature.

For forty-one years there were only about a thousand copies printed of Shakespeare's plays. Shadwell and Little were as popular with their contemporaries as Dryden and Pope. But where are they now? Darwin was thought a genius in his day, and his "Botanic Garden" esteemed a great poem. Dryden's jejune transcripts of Chaucer delighted the world, which would not read the originals; and one may safely say that he touched nothing of Chaucer which he did not spoil. Percy's "Reliques of English Ballad Poetry" was ridiculed by the great autocrat, Johnson; and Percy himself bowed to the spirit of the age in the poems which he avowed as his own. The turgid bombast of Macpherson's "Ossian" was received with enthusiasm by those who laughed at the old ballads. Present popularity, in a word, is no guarantee of future fame.

M. And a blessed fact it is for all bad poets to console themselves with. If you do not admire their verses, if the cold world turns a deaf ear to them, they range themselves in their own imagination with the great poets who were not recognized at first, and thus salve the wounds of criticism.

B. Thus far the most popular poet of to-day is Tupper, or rather was Tupper, for the ungrateful world begins to look upon him with a cold eye. But twenty years ago his "Proverbial Philosophy" was on nearly every drawing-room table, and there is probably no other writer of our age whose poems have gone through so many editions, and of which so many copies have been sold.

M. They had a sort of moral and religious twang about them that gave them vogue, — a sort of bastard Old Testament form, which produced an effect on the pious. He "said an undisputed thing in such a solemn way," that the world absolutely believed that there must be something profound in his utterances. You have only to put any kind of self-evident moral and religious statements into verse, and you are sure to find readers, no matter how feeble the twaddle may be.

Suppose, for instance, that I say: —

"Seldom goeth man up stairs that he cometh not down again,
And he who ascendeth with pride and strength
Will often descend in grief.
For lo! — it is given to us to sleep by night
And to wake to work by day,
And our dreams of the night avail us naught,
When the work of the day is come.
And thus, O dreamer, it is with life,
And the labor thereof and the joy."

This is all twaddling nonsense, but it has an air of meaning something perhaps profound.

B. I think it is remarkably good sense — and it awakens in me, as you say, a half feeling of reverence.

M. Take, again, the hymns we sing in church. How many of them are there that, were it not for their catch-words of religion, any human being would read? How much real feeling, real piety, real aspiration, do they breathe? Are they not, as a whole, a mass of affected phrases, unreal sentiment, and very bad writing?

B. Oh, that is going altogether too far. But I agree that, however much piety there may be in them, there is for the most part very little poetry. The world would not endure verses on any other subject so wanting in all that constitutes poetry and truth of sentiment. They are machine made, without a breath of inspiration or a glow of feeling. The cold-bloodedness with which the most offensive images are introduced, the doggerel in which the commonplaces of the pulpit are rehearsed, and the strange unreality of the thoughts are so foreign to any true religious sentiment, that one cannot help wondering how they can have been written by earnest minds. Let me not sweep them all, however, into the same net. Some of them are real, simple and devout, give expression of natural feelings of piety and supplication; but these are exceptions. What a satisfaction it is to come across such a one at long intervals, as, for instance, "While Thee I seek, protecting power"!

M. What do you think of these four lines, which are all I can remember of an old hymn? Absurd as they are, I have no doubt they were sung with earnestness and feeling: —

> "For Faith is like a rusty lock
> Anointed by Thy grace;
> We rub, and rub, and rub, and rub,
> Until we see Thy face."

B. It seems scarcely possible that they should have been written with a serious intention.

M. It is all a matter of taste. Many things

seem ridiculous to one age which delight another. Our notions have very much changed as to what poetry is within this century. Look simply at the list of Lives of the Poets by Dr. Johnson. Cowley is the first name. Chaucer, Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, and all of their time nearly, are omitted; while Phillips, Stepney, Spratt, Walsh, Duke, Smith, Broome, and others of the same stamp, are thought worthy to be recorded as among the poets of England.

B. Oh, that was editor's work, and Johnson probably wrote the lives of those whom his publisher selected. At all events, let us hope he did. Some of them he could not possibly have deemed to be entitled to the august name of Poet.

M. At all events, Johnson himself informs us that it was by his recommendation that the poems of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden were added to his collection of English poets, and that he wrote their lives of his own free will.

B. Poets indeed!

M. I think I could give you a recipe for making poetry which would be sure of at least present popularity.

B. Pray let me hear it.

M. In the first place, you must not be original. You must attempt nothing new, and you must not put too much mind into the composition. This is preliminary. Then take equal parts of weak self-evident morality and the commonplaces of religious sentiment. Mix them well, and dilute them

with poetic verbiage. Flavor them with sentimentality and sadness. Add if you can a few phrases from the New or Old Testament; put in a few images from the fields; sprinkle here and there a faded rose or a violet, and then set them in a mould of rhymes. Double the rhymes if you can — it produces a good effect. Be careful to keep them out of the sun, and it is more to the general taste to color them strongly with melancholy; but sometimes you may vary the flavor by a stimulating essence of work and self-sacrifice and encouragement to active benevolence. The less real meaning you put into them the better. Serve them up on cream-colored paper, with fantastic emblems on the border, and the dish will be sure to be popular.

B. Let me add one thing more. Give the dish a good well-known name. Names stand for a great deal. The Harp of Patience, Dead Leaves, Faded Roses, for instance; alliteration is even better; Hymns of Humanity, Gleams of Grace, Dreams in Darkness.

M. I accept the suggestion. Now for an entirely different receipt for entirely different minds. To make a popular romance: Take a number of characters, some supernaturally good, some supernaturally bad, and roll them up in a mass of mystery and crime. Dash in murder, and poison, and secrecy *ad libitum;* and if this be not sufficient, add a flavor of bigamy and madness. Be careful not to stint your heroine of masses of golden hair

and full pouting lips, magnetizing eyes and subtle fascinations of every kind. Give your central hero a muscular and brutal force and figure, under which is concealed a tender and sensitive heart. Do not care for nature; but the more sensitive he is in his honor the more harsh and bad let his manners be. Add a weak-minded clergyman, a helpless girl, and a detective who sees through everything with supernatural acuteness. Put the whole into a wild and ghastly country, and serve the dish up to your readers at midnight.

B. A capital dish to sleep on, if it does not give one a nightmare.

M. Do women like brutal men? They are certainly fond of drawing them in their novels. They generally either give us as their hero a consumptive clergyman, devoted to the poor, and constantly investigating slums, and getting a typhus fever in consequence; or a fellow with brutal manners, large muscles, and an infinitely tender heart, which he displays in the most peculiar and unexpected moments. It would seem as if, by contrast to their own natures, they preferred a touch of brutality and violence in our sex. If they do not take to this, they go in for the Lara and Conrad style — a melancholy creature, who has suffered terribly, who loves to skulk into the shadow, who avoids society, and cultivates his wounded heart.

B. Women's men and men's men are very different; as men's women and women's women also are. We cannot understand the reason why cer-

tain men have great success with the other sex, who to us are blanks, or, at least, without attraction.

M. I am afraid we shall get on the subject of women's rights and the difference of sex — a subject I detest.

B. Oh, I am a great advocate for their rights. I wish them to do everything they can; and it seems to me they are not very much oppressed in the present day. I am also a great advocate of men's rights; and there is nothing less agreeable than a mannish woman, except a womanish man.

M. You shall not seduce me into any discussion on this subject. Women are the most charming and delightful creatures in the world. I really don't know what we should do without them. But there is the bell of the old monastery ringing, and the nuns are going to vespers: shall we go and hear them sing at the Trinità dei Monti?

B. Agreed.

V.

Belton. Is this Freedom's temple? Is this door its portal! If so, here is a subject for your art. Behold me! I am the Washington of Robert Treat Paine — repulsing with his breast the assaults of the thunder, and conducting "every flash to the deep" with the point of my sword. Listen: —

> "Should the tempest of war overshadow our land,
> Its bolts ne'er could rend Freedom's temple asunder;
> For, unmoved at its portal would Washington stand,
> And repulse with his breast the assaults of the thunder."

Mallett. Bravo! Bravo!

B. I have not been able to get those lines out of my mind since you repeated them the other day. I have been reciting them to myself ever since, in a loud, declamatory tone, striking an attitude, and repulsing with my breast the assault of the thunder. Tell me something more about this amazing Paine.

M. After our conversation the other day, on my return home, I refreshed my own memory by reading a biographical sketch of him by his friend Mr. Charles Prentiss; and being in the vein, I then took up the life of Dr. Darwin, the famous poet, written by the scarcely less famous Miss Anna Seward. They amused me so much that I have

brought them both down to the studio to read you some choice passages from each.

B. Pray do.

M. To begin with Robert Treat Paine. Slightingly as you may think of his genius, he was thought to be the great poet of his age in America. Mr. Prentiss says of his poems that "they are the legitimate and indisputable heirs of immortality;" and he boldly prophesies that "he will take his place, not by the courtesy of the coming age, but by the full and consentient suffrage of posterity, on the same shelf with the prince of English rhyme" — by whom he means, of course, Dryden.

B. Does it not make one doubt our own judgment of our contemporaries, when we hear such trumpeting as this about a man whose very name has now passed into oblivion?

M. Ah! you never came in contact with him personally, and you can therefore form little idea of the influence he exerted. Mr. Selfridge, his friend, says of him: "Once engaged he was an electric battery; approach him and he scintillated; touch him and he emitted a blaze."

B. What a tremendous fellow, to be sure!

M. This was the judgment formed of his powers, not by common, vulgar flatterers, but by men of ability and distinction, such as Mr. Selfridge and Mr. Prentiss, both of whom were men of very considerable power and repute.

B. All I can say is that it is simply amazing.

M. Great as the temporary reputation of Paine

was in America, the reputation of Dr. Darwin in England was higher and wider. The distinction which he won in his profession of medicine was overshadowed by his fame as a poet; and his admirable medical works were held in far less esteem than the pompous, artificial, and ingeniously absurd poems of "The Botanic Garden," and the "Loves of the Plants," with their gnomes and nymphs and ridiculous impersonations, which were afterwards so admirably travestied by Canning in his "Loves of the Triangles." If anything could be more absurd than the poems themselves in their form, conception, and execution, it would be Miss Seward's criticisms of them. Indeed it is scarcely possible to believe that such a work as her "Life of Dr. Darwin" could have been written in the present century; its stilted style, its unnatural verbiage, its pompous solemnity, are so out of keeping with our modern habits of thought, feeling, and expression. Let me read you some passages: —

"Poetry," says Miss Seward, "has nothing more sublime than this, the picture of a town on fire: —

"'From dome to dome, when flames infuriate climb,
Sweep the long street, invest the tower sublime,
Gild the tall vanes amid the astonished night,
And reddening heaven returns the sanguine light;
While with vast strides and bristling hair aloof,
Pale Danger glides along the falling roof;
And giant Terror howling in amaze,
Moves his dark limbs along the lurid blaze.
Nymphs! you first taught the gelid wave to rise,
Hurled in resplendent arches to the skies;
In iron cells condensed the airy spring,

> And imp'd the torrent with unfailing wing;
> On the fierce flames the stream impetuous falls,
> And sudden darkness shrouds the shattered walls;
> Steam, smoke, and dust in blended volumes roll,
> And night and silence repossess the pole.'"

There! what do you think of that?

B. I feel like giant Terror — I "howl in amaze."

M. I was sure you would be impressed by this. Think of "imping a torrent with unfailing wing," and the "vast strides and bristling hair" of Danger, and the "gelid waves" of the fire-engine, "hurled in resplendent arches to the skies." Think of night and silence repossessing the pole like two tame bears. But let me read you now some passages from Miss Seward's "Analysis of the Botanic Garden." "After that landscape of the scene which forms the exordium, the Goddess of Botany descends in gorgeous gayety."

B. "Gorgeous gayety!" Good heavens!

M. Yes, gorgeous gayety; and she thus makes her appearance: —

> "She comes, the Goddess, through the whispering air,
> Bright as the morn descends her blushing car."

"Spring welcomes her with fragrance and with song, and to receive her commission the four elements attend. They are allegorized as gnomes, water-nymphs, and sylphs, and nymphs of fire. Her address to each class and the business she allots to them form the four cantos of the first part of the poem. The ladies of Ignition receive her primal attention."

B. No! You have invented that.

M. I could not invent anything half so good. Be patient. "The picture with which her address commences is of consummate brilliance and grace. Behold it, reader, and judge if this praise be too glowing!"

> "Nymphs of primeval fire! your vestal train,
> Hung with gold tresses o'er the vast inane,
> Pierced with your silver shafts the throne of night,
> And charmed young nature's opening eyes with light."

B. "Vast inane," indeed!

M. Listen, and don't interrupt. "The Darwinian creation which ensues charms us infinitely, even while we recollect the simpler greatness on the page of Moses, and on its sublime paraphrase in the 'Paradise Lost.' The creation in this poem is astronomic, and involves the universe, and as such is of excellence unequaled in its kind, and never to be excelled in the grandeur of its conceptions: —

> "'"Let there be light! proclaimed the almighty Lord:
> Astonished Chaos heard the potent word;
> Through all his realms the kindling Ether runs,
> And the mass starts into a million suns.
> Earths round each sun with quick explosions burst,
> And second planets issue from the first;
> Bend, as they journey with projectile force,
> In bright ellipses their reluctant course.
> Orbs wheel in orbs, round centres centres roll,
> And form, self-balanced, one revolving whole.
> Onward they move amid their bright abode,
> Space without bound — the bosom of their God.'"

And listen to this commentary: "The word

of the Creator setting into instant and universal blaze the ignited particles of Chaos till they burst into countless suns, is an idea sublime in the first degree."

B. Sublime indeed! It is more like the fireworks and the girandola of Castel St. Angelo than anything I ever read. What would Dr. Darwin of to-day say to all this? Here is "evolution" with a vengeance! I think it almost unhandsome, after the first Dr. Darwin had so satisfactorily arranged creation in a moment, and astonished Chaos, that his descendant should undertake to "evolve" nature by such tedious processes.

M. Miss Seward continues: "The subsequent comments of the goddess on the powers of the nymphs of fire introduce pictures of the lightning and the rainbow, the exterior sky, the twilight, the meteor, the aurora borealis — of the planets, the comet, and all the *ethereal blaze* of the universe."

B. Comprehensive. Anything else?

M. She next exhibits her as superintending the subterranean and external volcanoes: —

> "'You from deep cauldrons and unmeasured caves
> Blow flaming airs or pour vitrescent waves;
> O'er shining oceans ray volcanic light,
> Or hurl innocuous embers through the night.'"

B. Why "innocuous?"

M. Have you any objection to "innocuous" as a word?

B. Does it mean anything?

M. Oh, this is "to consider too curiously."

Why should it mean anything? But let me go on. The goddess proceeds to remind her handmaids of their employments, says they lead their glittering bands around the sinking day, and, when the sun retreats, confine in the folds of air his lingering fires to the cold bosom of earth: —

> "'O'er eve's pale forms diffuse phosphoric light,
> And deck with lambent flames the shrine of night.'"

Now mark what Miss Seward says of this: "Surely there cannot be a more beautiful description of a vernal twilight. The phosphorescent quality of the Bolognian stone, Beccari's prismatic shells, and the harp of Memnon, which is recorded to have breathed spontaneous chords when shone upon by the rising sun, are all compared to the glimmerings of the horizon. So, also, the luminous insects, the glow-worm, the fire-flies of the tropics, the fabulous *ignis fatuus*, and the *Gymnotus electricus*, brought to England from Surinam in South America about the year 1783, — a fish whose electric power is a provocation mortal to his enemy. He is compared to the Olympian eagle that bears the lightning in his talons." There! what do you think of that?

B. Give me the book. You have invented, at least, a part of it, as you are accustomed to do. I I am up to your tricks.

M. No; on my word, I have not interpolated a word. See for yourself.

B. I can scarce believe my own eyes. How

prettily that bit of information is introduced about the *Gymnotus electricus* brought from Surinam in South America about the year 1783!

M. Shall I go on, or do I bore you?

B. Pray go on.

M. "The Fourth Canto opens with a sunrise and a rainbow, each of Homeric excellency. The Muse of Botany gazes enchanted on the scene, and swells the song of Paphos" (whatever that may happen to be) "to softer chords." Her poet adds: —

> "'Long aisles of oaks returned the silver sound,
> And amorous echoes talked along the ground.'"

B. Beautiful! beautiful!! beautiful!!!

> "And amorous echoes talked along the ground."

"Amorous echoes"! That is the finest thing I have heard yet!

M. Restrain your enthusiasm. After a short digression, Miss Seward continues: "But to resume, the botanic goddess and her enumeration of the interesting employments of the third class of nymphs, their disposal of those bright waters which make Britain irriguous, verdant, and fertile."

B. Irriguous?

M. Yes, irriguous; and I will, as Bardolph says, "maintain the word with my sword to be a good soldier-like word, and a word of exceeding good command, by heaven!" Irriguous, "that is when a country is, as they say, irriguous, or when a country is being whereby a' may be thought to be irriguous, which is an excellent thing." But

to leave Bardolph and go on with Miss Seward: "We find this beautiful couplet in the course of the passage: —

> "'You with nice ear on tiptoe strains pervade
> Dim walks of morn or evening's silent shade.'"

B. "Tiptoe strains" is good.

M. Good? Miss Seward does not only think it good, — she cries out in her enthusiasm, — "What an exquisite picture!" I shall now only cite one other passage, and then I will lend you the book to read for yourself. And this shall be the description of a simoom, — or rather of Simoom, for of course he is personified: —

> "Arrest Simoom amid his waste of sand,
> The poisoned javelin balanced in his hand:
> Fierce on blue streams he rides the tainted air,
> *Points his keen eye, and waves his whistling hair;*
> While, as he turns, the undulating soil
> Rolls in red waves and *billowy deserts boil.*"

"This," says Miss Seward, "is a fine picture of the Demon of Pestilence. The speed of his approach is marked by the strong current of air in which he passed, and by the term 'whistling' as applied to his hair." There, I have done.

B. "Points his keen eye, and waves his whistling hair." Magnificent! It's all very well to talk about arresting Simoom, with his keen eye pointed and his whistling hair, while billowy deserts are boiling round you; but I distinctly decline to make the attempt. What a subject for a picture! In fact, what a series of pictures could be made from this work!

M. There is one couplet of Paine's — I am sorry that it is the only one I can bring into definite form out of vague mists of my memory — which is worthy of a place with some of these. Such as it is I give it you. Some tremendous convulsion of nature is anticipated by him for some purpose, and he closes with these lines: —

> "And the vast alcove of creation blaze,
> Till nature's self the Vandal torch should raise."

B. Did you ever read Barlow's "Columbiad," the great epic of the American Revolution?

M. All of it? *Gott bewahr!* I have read a good deal of it, however, in pure amusement, but it has all gone out of my memory. But there is no foolishness which is not to be found in verse, and there is no verse so bad that it does not find readers.

B. Do you remember in our young days a fellow who called himself the Lynn bard?

M. Perfectly, and he used to wander along the shores of the πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης, and wildly gesticulate to the winds and the sea, and wave his whistling hair and point his keen eye, and pour forth his feelings in verse. One of his poems, I remember, commenced thus: —

> "The moon was rising on the sea,
> Round as the fruit of orange tree;
> I wandered forth to meet my dear;
> And found her sitting right down here."

B. And then there was a remarkable Southern poet, over whose verses we used to "laugh consumedly" in our university days.

M. "By cock and pie, sir," I remember him well. He was a tremendous Pistol, who never would "aggravate his choler" in verse, though, I dare say, he was a quiet, peaceable gentleman enough at home and in prose, with a "mellifluous voice," and a "sweet and contagious man, i' faith." A few of his verses still stick in my mind, and I think —

B. Let us have them.

M. They are but few; but let us not measure quality by quantity, — *numerantur non ponderantur.* They are out of a long wild poem, not destitute of a certain straggling untrained talent, though mixed up with such fustian and folly that we used to roar with laughter over them. Scene, midnight — a wild stormy night — a lover in despair — he goes to the window: —

> "He raised the lattice, oped the blind,
> He looked around, before, behind,
> And when he heard the hinges skreak,
> He thought it was his Lena's shriek.
> . . . . . .
> For Lena was divinely fair,
> But he had swapped her for despair."

B. That is a magnificent idea, — swapping your lady-love for despair. And skreak is good, too, — very good. "Good phrases are surely and ever were very commendable."

M. And yet, after all, laugh as we may over these absurdities, there is something melancholy in the thought of the hours, months, and even years, that were spent over these poems, — of the hopes,

ambitions, which falsely cheered the authors as they wrote, — of the amount of talent and toil wasted upon them that was destined never to be rewarded. Even in the midst of our laughter we are almost tempted to weep over these abortive efforts for the immortality of fame. Every jeer of criticism is a deadly stab to hopes that were sweet almost as life, — to ambitions which were pure as they were foolish. When this thought comes over one, criticism seems cruel, and our laugh has a Satanic echo.

B. Don't get sentimental.

M. Do you remember that absurd statue of Moses that stands over the fountain at the entrance of the Piazza de' Termini?

B. Oh, yes! that squat, broad, fierce-looking figure swaddled in heavy draperies, and so stunted that it seems to have no legs.

M. The same. Well, there is a story connected with that, sad enough to make one pause before uttering a savage jeer of criticism. The sculptor, whose very name is fortunately buried in oblivion, was young, enthusiastic, ambitious, and self-reliant; and when the commission to make this statue was given him, he boasted that he would model a Moses that should entirely eclipse that of Michael Angelo. It was a foolish boast, but he was young and ardent, and let us forgive him his boast. Filled with a noble ambition to excel, he shut himself up in his studio, and labored strenuously and in secret on his work. At last it was finished, and

the doors were thrown open to the public. But instead of the full acclaim of Fame which he had expected, he only heard reverberating from all sides cries of derision and scorn, and, driven to desperation and madness by this cruel shattering of all his hopes, he rushed to the Tiber and drowned himself.

B. So much the better, perhaps. We have probably been saved some very bad statues; and we have more than enough of these already.

M. Don't sneer at him. Nothing is so easy as to sneer. I call this only sad, and all the more sad because the artist really had talent and power. Absurd in many respects as this statue is, it shows vigor and purpose. It does not sin on the side of weakness, but of exaggeration; and time and study would probably have tamed him down to truth and nature. But the blow was too sudden and he fell beneath it.

B. 'T is as Ulysses says: —

"No man is the lord of anything,
Though in and of him there be much consisting,
Till he communicate his parts to others.
Nor doth he in himself know them for aught
Till he behold them formed in the applause
Where they 're extended, — which, like an arch, reverberates
The voice again, or like a gate of steel
Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
His figure and his heat."

M. And when that arch reverberates only the cries of scorn, what wonder that a sensitive mind goes mad?

B. I believe that to most authors censure gives more pain than praise does pleasure. The arrow of fault-finding has a poisonous barb that rankles in the wound it makes. One would have thought that Voltaire had a rhinoceros epidermis in such matters, — that, scorner and bitter critic as he was himself, he would have accepted criticism on his own works at least with calmness; but Madame de Graffigny says of him that he "was altogether indifferent to praise, while the least word from his enemies drove him crazy." Take again, among many others who might be mentioned, Sir Walter Scott. He tells us that he made it a rule never to read an attack upon himself; and Captain Hall, quoting this statement, adds: "Praise, he says, gives him no pleasure, and censure annoys him." I have known several distinguished authors in our own day who refused to read any criticisms, favorable or otherwise, of their works; and one who always fled the country when publishing a book.

M. Criticism is not certainly like —

> "The bat of Indian brakes,
> Whose pinions fan the wound it makes;
> And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
> It sucks the life-blood from his vein."

You cannot expect any one to relish attacks on his works, or criticism and fault-finding, however just. Sir Walter found probably that censure of his writings, while it gave him pain, did him no good, as it always came too late. This with him, as with many others, did not arise from any self-suffi-

ciency, or over-estimate of himself and of what he had achieved. In the Introduction to the "Lady of the Lake" he says: "As the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to his late Majesty, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite; so can I with honest truth exculpate myself from ever having been a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million."

B. Still a man must believe in himself, or he will do nothing great. If he had no faith in his work, there would be no sufficient spur and motive to do it.

M. While we are doing it, yes; but after it is done, no. One might as well fall in love with one's own face as with one's own work. It is astonishing, after it is done, how flat, tame, and unsatisfactory seem those passages which in the writing seemed so lively, spirited, and clever. There is always a terrible back-water after a thing is done.

B. Perhaps. Yet authors generally seem to be amazingly fond of their own works. As long as you praise them, they pretend to be modest; but attack them, and they will start up to prove that the very defects you point out constitute their greatest merits.

M. What a wonderful worker Scott was! In quantity, to say nothing of quality, I know of no English writer of his time who can be compared with him; though in later days others have

equaled him in the number of their works. He wrote, if I remember right, some ninety volumes. Of these, forty-eight volumes of novels, and twenty-one of history and biography, were produced between 1814 and 1831, or in about seventeen years; which alone would give an average of four volumes a year, or one for every three months. But, besides these, he had already written twenty-one volumes of poetry and prose, which had been previously published. And all this was done with an ease which seems astonishing, leaving him time to devote himself to society and all sorts of other occupations. That marvelous hand was never weary. The stream of fancy and invention never ran dry. Temporary disease did not check his inspiration, and one of his most striking works — one, indeed, in which he touched perhaps the highest point of his genius, "The Bride of Lammermoor" — was dictated from a bed of sickness. Not until paralysis had struck him down, and the hand of death was on him, did that pen, which had so long enchanted the world, drop from his hand. And what a loss he was! What possibilities of joy and delight and feeling died with him, when the splendid light of his genius, which had so long shed its glory on Scotland, dropped below the horizon! But go where you will in that romantic land, his genius still irradiates it. There is scarcely a rock, or a crag, or a lake, a city, a town, or a village, where his ideal creations do not live and walk and breathe, more real than the actual men and

women who tread the streets, or climb the fastnesses, or trample upon the heath of Scotland.

B. I am glad to hear you speak with such enthusiasm of him. It is the fashion, I fear, now to rank him in literature far lower than he deserves: —

> "So our virtues
> Lie in the interpretation of the time.
> One fire drives out one fire, one nail one nail."

When he wrote he was almost alone in the field. But literature has since swarmed with novelists, and tastes have changed.

M. I don't know that they have altogether changed for the better. Where is the "Great Magician" to take his place? For great magician he was; and out of the realms of history and of ideal regions beyond our ken, he had the art to evoke beings of the past and of the imagination, with whom to delight us. Over all the scenery of Scotland he threw a veil of poetic enchantment. He amused us with his rich humor, he excited us with thrilling incidents, he painted with equal facility the days of chivalry and the common life of the people of his day. Some of the characters he drew are living portraits, drawn with wonderful truth to nature. What can be more admirable in drawing than Andrew Fairservice, Edie Ochiltree, Caleb Balderstone, the Antiquary Monkbarns, Dugald Dalgetty, Mause and Cuddie Headrigg, and a score of others in his comic gallery? What more touching and simple than Jeanie Deans?

What more romantic than the Master of Ravenswood? What more fanatically powerful than Balfour of Burley? In his female heroines he was less successful; and it is only exceptionally that he gives us such spirited sketches as Di Vernon and Rebecca. But in his secondary female characters he is admirable, and in many of his men masterly. To me, one of the most remarkable figures he ever drew was that of Conachar. Nothing could be more difficult than to provoke at once pity, contempt, and sympathy for a coward. Yet he has successfully achieved this feat; and as far as I can recollect, it is the sole instance in English literature where such an attempt was ever made. More than this, he has drawn two cowards in this remarkable novel, — each quite different from the other and contrasted with eminent skill — the comic, swaggering, good-natured, fussy little coward, Oliver Proudfute, who provokes a perpetual smile; and the sullen, irritable, proud, and revengeful coward, Conachar, whom we cannot but pity, while we despise him. "The Fair Maid of Perth" was always a favorite of mine. It has perhaps more variety of interest, incident, and characters than any he ever wrote, and it never flags. Think of Ramorny, Rothesay, and Bonthron; the sturdy smith, and his comic reflection Proudfute; Dwining the physician; Simon Glover the plain burgess; Conachar the apprentice and the chief of his clan, and his heroic foster-father, who was ready to sacrifice life, family, everything

for his weak-hearted foster-son. Think of the gay morris-dancers; the riot and recklessness of the duke and his boon companions; the darkened chamber of the mutilated Ramorny, and his grim interview with Rothesay and Dwining; the glee-woman at the castle, and the troubles of the honest and fiery smith; the pathetic death of the young prince, and the silence and horror that is thrown over it; and the exciting, vivid, and bloody fray of the clan Chattan and the clan Quhele, which is epic in its character. What variety, what interest, what excitement, there is throughout!

B. This novel was a favorite also of Goethe, which it may give you satisfaction to know; but I do not think ordinarily that it is reckoned one of Scott's best novels.

M. Tastes differ. I only speak for myself. I always read it with pleasure.

B. You were speaking of the wonderful fertility of his genius, and of the amount of work he did. It is indeed surprising; but in quantity he cannot compare with Lope de Vega, who, I fancy, is the most voluminous of all writers, and whose fertility of creation and ease of execution seem simply marvelous. He left, it is said, no less than twenty-one million three hundred thousand verses in print, besides a mass of MSS. According to the account of Montalvan, himself a voluminous writer and the intimate friend of De Vega, he furnished the theatre with eighteen hundred regular plays, and four hundred autos or religious dramas. He him-

self states that he composed more than one hundred comedies in the almost incredibly short space of twenty-four hours each, each comedy averaging between two and three thousand verses, a great part of them rhymed and interspersed with sonnets and difficult forms of versification. One would suppose that this was enough for any man to do; but besides this, his time was occupied by various other occupations than writing. Nor did he break down under this labor; on the contrary, he lived to a good old age, dying when he was seventy-two, and thoroughly enjoying life. Supposing him to have given fifty years of his life to composition alone, he must have averaged a play a week, without taking into consideration twenty-one volumes quarto, seven miscellaneous works, including five epics, all of which are in print.

M. The quantity is overpowering; but the quality, how is that?

B. Remarkably good, considering the quantity. They had great success when they were written, though tastes have changed, and only very few of them still keep possession of the stage in Spain. Montalvan tells rather an amusing story about one of these plays. It seems that he himself once undertook, in connection with Lope, to furnish the theatre with a comedy at very short notice: accordingly he rose at two o'clock in the morning in order to get through with his half of the play, and by eleven o'clock he had completed it. When one considers that a play ordinarily covered from thirty to forty

pages, each of one hundred lines, this seems an extraordinary feat in itself, exhibiting at least immense facility. Six lines a minute is about as fast as one can easily write, merely mechanically; and to achieve this feat Montalvan must have averaged this number every minute for nine hours, with no pause for invention or hesitation. Having finished his work, he went down to walk in the garden, and there found his brother poet Lope pruning an orange-tree. "Well, how did you get on?" said he. "Very well," answered Lope; "I arose early, at about five, and after I had finished my work I ate my breakfast; since then I have written a letter of fifty triplets, and watered the whole garden, which has tired me a good deal." What do you say to that?

M. I don't believe it; I don't think, merely mechanically, it would be possible. This would have required him to write nine lines a minute, and there are very few persons who can copy five lines, though word for word it be read out to them, in that space of time. I write very fast, and it takes me that time to write seven; I have tried it.

B. I merely repeat the story of Montalvan, and I suppose many of the lines are very short; he may have used shorthand.

M. That alone could in my belief have made it possible. Such excessive production must, however, lead to mannerism and repetition. The mind requires fallow times of leisure between its harvests. The stream finally runs shallow if too much be constantly drawn from it.

B. One cannot give absolute rules in such cases. Genius is with some a perennial spring, which never runs dry; with others it is a petroleum well, which suddenly goes out; but with the highest minds it is like a light which is not spent with giving.

M. A bad comparison, for the light itself consumes the candle.

B. As the mind consumes the flesh, but not itself. But since you object to my figures of speech, let me call in Shakespeare to help me: —

> "Our poesy is as a gum which oozes
> From whence 't is nourished: the fire in the flint
> Shows not till it be struck; our gentle flame
> Provokes itself, and, like the current, flies
> Each bound it chafes."

Shallow minds fall soon into mannerism, but great minds are not to be bounded by old limits. They overflow their banks in times of fullness, and go ever on, enlarging and deepening their currents. Besides, does not one's mind strengthen as much as one's muscles by constant practice? Does not lying fallow often mean merely being idle? Does not mannerism arise rather from laziness of purpose than limitation of faculties? Of course one cannot be original to order, — even to one's own order; but does doing nothing for a time help us?

M. I have no doubt it does. Does it not strengthen one to sleep? But, by the way, I see that in the quotation you have just made from Shakespeare you have adopted Pope's emendations

of the passage. It reads in the folio, "Our poesy is as a *gowne which vses.*" This, which is plainly a misprint, was amended by Pope and Johnson to "gum which oozes," — one suggesting "gum" and the other "oozes;" and it has, I believe, been generally accepted. I cannot, however, assent to it. "Gowne" of course is wrong, but to liken poesy to a "gum," and to think of poesy "oozing" out, does not recommend itself to me as Shakespearean, and I propose this reading: "Our poesy is as a germ that issues." "Germe" might easily be misprinted for "gowne," and the image seems much more vital and spontaneous than that of a gum oozing.

B. I was struck the other day, in reading Goethe's essay on "Ancient and Modern," by his deliberate confession that he likes mannerists, and is pleased with the possession of their works. He places Raffaelle above Leonardo da Vinci and Michel Angelo, and values his facility above all their great qualities. After strenuously praising the school of the Caracci, which, by almost universal consent, is placed in the second rank, and regarded as academical in its character and wanting the highest inspiration of art, he says: "Here was a grand work of talent, earnestness, industry, and consecutive advantages. Here was an element for the natural and artistic development of admirable powers. We see whole dozens of excellent artists produced by it, each practicing and cultivating his peculiar talent according to the same general idea;

so that it seems hardly possible that after-times should produce anything similar." He then proceeds to exalt Rubens and the "crowd of Dutch painters of the seventeenth century," and the "incredible sagacity with which their eye pierced into nature, and the facility with which they succeeded in expressing her legitimate charm, so as to enchant us everywhere. Nay," he continues, "in proportion as we possess the same qualities, we are willing for a time to limit ourselves exclusively to the examination and attraction of these productions, and are contented with the possession and enjoyment of this class of pictures exclusively." And then follows an elaborate analysis of a series of etchings by Sebastian Bourbon, an artist of the fifteenth century, "whose talent," he says, "has never received its due praise." This, I confess, surprised me in Goethe.

M. It does not surprise me. His genius had a deliberate method of action and composition which resembled in many respects the art of the Caracci, and of even the lower school of their followers. He was essentially academic in his turn of mind; and naturally he overvalued academic and almost mechanical facility above the higher methods and daring graspings of great genius. He had a high esteem for the Muses, and no passion for them. He shook hands in the most friendly manner with them, always was proper, sometimes condescending, to them, and never omitted the forms and ceremonies of politeness; when he called on

them he always said, "Ich empfehle mich," and bowed low. But he was never passionately in love with them, — never gave his heart to them with a complete self-surrender. He did not feel with Schiller that —

> "Der allein besitzt die Musen,
> Der sie trägt im warmen Busen,
> Dem Vandalen sind sie Stein."

No; he rather put them to school, like a stiff old schoolmaster.

B. I am sorry I introduced this subject. You are thoroughly unfair to Goethe; and though there is a certain truth in all you say, you exaggerate it until it becomes a falsity.

M. I like Schiller's essays on art far better than Goethe's. There are some passages in his æsthetic letters on the education of man that are wonderfully noble, eloquent, and ideal in character; and I wish I had them here, that I might read you some. I am almost tempted to try to recall them now from memory, but I should do them injustice, and so let it be for another day, when I will bring you the book and read them to you.

B. You know I am fond of the Germans.

M. I know you are; but I cannot see what you find so admirable in their imaginative literature, nor can I sympathize with the present rage for Germanism. In scholarship, philosophy, and criticism they stand very high, and in these branches their literature is admirable. But in almost all their books there is an absence of literary diges-

tion. They ransack libraries with an astonishing zeal and industry, and leave nothing to desire in the way of accumulation; but they have no power of rejection and assimilation. Everything is fish which comes to their net. A German's capacity of boring and of being bored is inexhaustible. In the higher grade of the imagination they are encumbered with facts and observations and commonplaces. Their works are tedious beyond measure. In their poetry there is, for the most part, no irradiation, — no fire to fuse, and transmute it from substance to spirit. "The German genius," says Matthew Arnold, in his admirable paper on the study of Celtic literature, "has steadiness with honesty," while the English has "energy with honesty." But steadiness and honesty are qualities which, admirable as they are in life and in certain forms of literature, have little relation to the imagination, save in a very exalted sense. The poetic imagination takes slight heed of honesty. It has a higher office. It fuses while it uses, and in its glow all things

> "Suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange."

It is often absolutely dishonest to real fact, and only true to ideal feeling. Fuel becomes flame in its enthusiastic embrace. What steadiness or honesty in their common sense is there in such lines as these? —

> "Take, oh take those lips away
> That so sweetly were forsworn,

> And those eyes, the break of day,
> Lights that do mislead the morn."

Literally this is absurd: ideally it is exquisite. There is no bane to poetry like commonplace, however true, however honest. But such graces as these are never snatched by the German muse, and she wearies us with platitudes and propositions. Even Goethe is so determined to be accurate to the fact, that in writing his "Alexis and Dora" he stopped to consider whether Alexis, when he takes leave of Dora, ought to put down or take up his bundle; so at least Eckermann reports from Goethe's own lips. This is purely German in its literalness.

B. Have you raved enough against the Germans? If so, let us go back to Sir Walter Scott, in regard to whom we shall agree. What do you think of his poetry?

M. I do not think it is of the highest kind, but of its kind it is masterly. It is healthy, vigorous, and almost epical in its character; and I cannot see why the world, which never is weary of praising Homer as the greatest of poets, or among the greatest of poets, turns such a cold shoulder to Scott, who, in his directness, spirit, and vigor, and straightforwardness of narrative, resembles Homer more than any of the poets of our age. The distance between them may be great, but their methods are very much the same; and had Scott written a thousand years ago in a dead tongue, we should never cease to chant his praises. Just as

the Iliad and Odyssey were founded on the old ballads of his age, are Scott's romantic poems founded on the old ballads of his. Both are purely objective poets. But while this is the acknowledged charm of Homer, it is alleged as a defect in Scott. There is a great mystery in a dead tongue; and I sometimes ask myself what we should think of Homer if he had written only fifty years ago, and in English. Take, for instance, the well-known battle of Flodden-field in "Marmion." I defy any one to read it without a stir in his blood, — it is so full of fire, spirit, picturesqueness, and directness. It carries you on with it without a flag of interest, and as description it is wonderful. No battle in Homer is more vivid, nor more true, nor more living in its energy. What a picture, for instance, is that of Marmion's riderless horse! —

> "Bloodshot his eye, his nostril spread,
> The loose rein dangling from his head;
> Housing and saddle bloody red,
> Lord Marmion's steed rushed by."

The very lilt of the metre carries you on with it.

B. The age does not like this sort of thing now in its own poetry, however much it may admire it in ancient works. We are introspective, analytic, subjective, and self-conscious, almost to morbidness. The epic and dramatic have less charm for us than the reflective and speculative. We anatomize our feelings and emotions and motives, and are not satisfied with the natural expression of

them in action. We are all Hamlets, and speculate and consider too anxiously. Our minds are

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

M. And yet this is the age of athletics, — of hunting, shooting, racing, deer-stalking, cricketing, and Alpine climbing. We have our "muscular Christianity," — our love of sports, — our adoration of strength. How is it that this finds no response in our poetry? How is it that, of the thousands who gather at every race-course, whose hearts gallop with the horses, and strain to the goal with pulsing blood, and to whom the excitement is like intoxication, the great majority prefer in poetry sentiment, introspection, nay, even a morbid anatomy of feelings and emotions and passions, to healthy narrative? One would think that such persons, rejoicing in action and feeling the thrill of life, would desire something corresponding to this in literature. But it would seem they do not. They do not like Scott's life and stir and vigor: they prefer another kind of thing. They change their minds as they do their dress when they come home, — taking off their hunting pinks, their shooting knickerbockers, and heavy shoes, and put on their dress-coat, patent-leather shoes, and white cravats. Their very voices and lives change. Nimrod becomes languid, and Di Vernon changes her manners with her riding-habit. Papa, tired with his day's work, lies on the sofa and sleeps. It is simply reaction and fashion.

B. Do you know where Scott lived when he was in Rome?

M. I believe he lived in the Palazzo Bernini, at the corner of the Via della Propaganda. So, at least, I have been told.

B. It is an admirable custom which has lately been introduced into Italy of inserting a tablet in the outer walls of houses in which distinguished men have been born, or died, or lived for a time, on which the fact is inscribed. It is always interesting to know where great men and women have been born, lived, written, or died. No one could visit Shakespeare's home without feeling nearer to him; no one could pass the old Tabard Inn, whence the pilgrims of the "Canterbury Tales" set out, without a certain sense of their reality. The places great spirits have inhabited or visited seem still to retain dim vestiges of them that touch the imagination. I never pass the Nomentan gate that I do not see Nero issuing thence on that fatal day when he fled so ignominiously to die a coward's death at the villa of Phaon. I always meet Cicero and Horace as I go down the Sacred Way; and whenever I drive by the old Albergo del Orso, the shape and figure of Montaigne, who once lived within its walls, rises before me. Many and many a day have I seemed to see Alfieri looking out of the window of the villa Strozzi towards the villa Negroni, where the Countess of Albany was waiting for him. Under the cypresses of the villa d'Este Tasso has wandered with me, and leaned beside the spilling fountain, while the nightingales sang in the shade. I never cross the Bridge of St. An-

gelo that I do not look for the figures of Raffaelle and his friend Bindo Altovite, under the three-arched balcony that hangs over the Tiber, and I should not be much suprised to see them talking there together. Canova and Thorwaldsen still seem to linger about the studios where they wrought their great works. In the night, as I pass the Castel St. Angelo, I see Benvenuto Cellini fighting on the walls, or slipping down from the tower to make his escape from his disgusting dungeon; and I almost hear the groans of Beatrice Cenci.

M. Ah! it is this that makes Rome so profoundly interesting. It is truly a city of the dead, and the spirits of the past haunt it and dwell in it as much as, nay, far more than, the busy persons of to-day. You turn no corner without meeting them. Voices are in the air that whisper to you wherever you go, — in the street, in the gardens, over the lone sweeps of the silent Campagna; from crumbling tombs, castles, and fortresses; from the arched and ivy-mantled aqueducts that stretch into the distance; from the hollowed caverns of the tufa galleries, where once the Christians hid; from the broken benches of the Colosseum, now so silent; from the giant arches of the ruined Baths. Is it the wind that whispers, or the ghosts of the ages past, as you wander over the grassy slopes, where at every step you tread upon some marble fragment of dead magnificence? And who and what are we that tread these streets of death? Only to-day's rear of the great army that has gone

before. Here stand the ruined dwellings that they once inhabited, but where are they? Where are those imperial figures whose frown was death? Where the long line of those who charmed the ear and the eye with the magic of art? Where the poets and lawgivers, the sculptors and painters? Where the smiling faces, the graceful steps of beauty, that led the world in their train? Over the gardens that their footsteps pressed, the shy lizard slips. Grasses and weeds grow in the crevices of the marble pavements which once were swept by their rustling robes. Lollia, Poppæa, Messalina, charm no more. The song of Virgil and Horace and Catullus is mute. The fights and frowns of Nero are over. The elaborate hypocrisies of Augustus are finished. The ornate orations of Cicero, the stinging satire of Tacitus and Juvenal, the lofty stoicism of Aurelius, all are of the past. And yet they still live and haunt the places that knew them on earth, and their forms still rise before us almost without an evocation as we wander through the ruined streets and houses and villas where once they lived and walked.

I was in Florence the other day, and as I was strolling through one of its broad-eaved narrow streets I came upon a sombre old house, in the walls of which was a marble tablet recording the fact that there Dante was born, and spent the first years of his youth. In a moment all else faded from my sight, — the tide of time swept back, — the little boy Dante was before me, looking out of

these windows, playing in these streets, innocent, gay, happy, ignorant of the future; and then in a moment the vision vanished, and I saw the thin, wan figure with the hooked nose, that we know so well; and those sad eyes that had gazed into the horrors of the Inferno looked into mine. It was like the sudden lifting of the curtain of time, with an instant's glimpse into the past, which profoundly affected me, and then it fell again.

B. There is one inscription on the Casa Guidi which I always stop to read, and when I read I sigh. It is a most graceful and tender tribute to one who loved Florence, and who sleeps in its historic earth,— as pure and noble a spirit as ever informed this tenement of clay, as rare a genius as ever dwelt within this noble city: I mean Elizabeth Barrett Browning. I quote it from memory, but I think it reads thus: "Qui scrisse e qui mori Elizabeth Barrett Browning che in cuor di donna conciliava scienza di dotta e spirito di poeta. Fece con suo verso aureoannello fra Italia ed Inghilterra. Pose questa memoria Firenze grata."

M. It is, as you say, a most graceful and tender tribute, and she well deserved it.

B. I have often sought for the house of Cagliostro, the famous magician, but I have never been able to identify it. He lived, I know, at one time in the Piazza di Spagna, and at another in a street near the Piazza Farnese, but the number I have never been able to discover. In both these houses he lived with his wife, the beautiful Lorenza Feli-

ciani, after their return from Paris, where they were engaged in the notorious intrigue of the diamond necklace; and it was in the latter of these houses that they were arrested to be imprisoned in the Castle St. Angelo.

M. Apropos of Cagliostro's magic, there is a curious and little-known legend about a gate in Rome just beyond the Church of St. Maria Maggiore. Here, as the story goes, a celebrated alchemist and magician was invited to stay by the owner of the house, or villa, who hoped to obtain some advantage to himself from his skill in the magical sciences; but the magician, after long enjoying his hospitality, and making no return for it, suddenly took French leave, leaving behind him a paper on which were written certain cabalistic signs. These were inscribed by the owner over the gate in a half-faith that they might be efficacious in bringing him the good fortune he desired, and there they may still be seen to this day, or rather they were to be seen there when I last passed that way. But so many changes are taking place in that quarter that it is possible they may have been removed. Reumont tells this story, I believe, in his book on Rome — and "se non è vero, è ben trovato."

B. Have you ever looked up the subject of magic?

M. Yes, a good deal; and very curious is the literature on this subject. Some of the old writers give you, for instance, complete formulas to raise

spirits of various kinds, and seem to have had an absolute belief in their efficacy. It seems to be pretty clear that they did have faith in these invocations; for it is impossible to believe that such men as Cardanus and Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, Johannes Bodinus, Pietro Abana, Hieronymus Fracastorius, Torreblanca, Delrio, Pomponatus, and Vairus, and men of that stamp, should have willfully endeavored to palm off on the world, with such calm seriousness, statements which they knew to be lies. At all events, they clearly profess their faith in the power of man, by magical processes, to raise the dead and wake spirits by incantation; and various receipts are given by them to effect such purposes.

B. I suppose that at the present day no one would believe in this. These men flourished in ignorant ages, when science was in its infancy, and when superstition was at its height.

M. You are very much mistaken if you believe that the day of the magicians is entirely past. The magical art is still cultivated, though in secrecy; and there are numbers of persons who still study it, practice it, and have faith in it. So, at least, I have been assured by men in whom I cannot but place trust, and who have declared to me that they themselves have attended magical *séances*, and employed the formulas of the magical books with successful results. Certain it is that the Abbé Constant devoted himself to the study of the magical arts and occult sciences, and, under the pseudonym

of Elephas Levi, wrote some remarkable books on the subject, and specially one on "La Haute Magie," which I recommend to you, if you are curious in such matters. There is no doubt, too, that a few persons were and are his disciples and pupils in France, and among them may be mentioned Desbarolles, the author of "Les Mystères de la Main." I must confess, however, that after reading "La Haute Magie" I was not very much enlightened on the subject. A great deal was hinted and insinuated and vaguely indicated, but comparatively little directly taught, either as to the theory or the practice of magic. A very accomplished and distinguished writer who lately died assured me that he himself, on one occasion, by following certain prescribed formulas, evoked one of the spirits held by those who believe to be very dangerous — understand me, not by means of any medium, but by his own practice; and that he satisfied himself by this and other experiments that the prescribed processes were not by any means delusions or follies. This same gentleman also told me, when I made a remark similar to yours, that I supposed no one in the present day believed in magical arts, that, on the contrary, he knew many who studied it, and believed in it. "Che volete," as the Italians say. You may make out of this what you choose; I merely repeat what I have been told.

B. Was he not making a fool of you, and trying to see if he could hoax you?

M. By no means. He was very serious; and

after giving me book and chapter for what he said, he finished by drawing my own horoscope very cleverly, thus showing that, at all events, he had studied the matter.

B. What did he prophesy about you?

M. No matter; I shall not give you the chance of laughing at me.

B. You stimulate my curiosity. I think I should like to try some of these evocations and incantations, but I am sure nothing would come of them. Is there any difficulty in performing them?

M. No, there is no real difficulty; but numerous materials and objects are required which are not to be obtained without trouble and expense, and certain arrangements must be made which are sometimes not easy; and though, if any one were seriously inclined to try the experiments, any little obstacles could be easily overcome, yet it requires a certain patience, seriousness, determination, and trouble that few persons would take in the vague hope of arriving at results in which they have a complete distrust. That is the whole of the matter. I have often thought of trying the experiments myself; but I have to begin with no faith, and therefore I shrank before the little obstacles of trouble, expense, and time. Besides, I don't know precisely what I should do with a demon or even a spirit, after I had raised it. I am more used to men and women, and I like them better. That is, I like a spirit plus a body more than a spirit minus a body. I talk and act more freely

with them. As for the spirits that are said to come up at tables by the late processes of incantation, they are generally so badly educated and speak such bad grammar that I don't care for their company. I could stand any amount of bad grammar if they would only tell me something that we all of us do not know, and that we desire to know. To rap out by tedious processes feeble commonplaces of morality and tawdry statements of future existence which correspond solely to the vulgarest notions, or to advise us as to our conduct in copy-book phrases of evil communications corrupting good manners, does not pay. If what they said were really worth saying, I would endure even the tediousness of their methods; but I cannot see that they have added to our literature anything very valuable. Shakespeare has so terribly degenerated at the table that I feel sorry to see that he has lost his mind in losing his body.

B. But you have had strange experiences, have you not?

M. Very strange experiences, which I cannot explain, and which nobody has ever been able to explain to my satisfaction, at least. But all that were of any note were physical and material results, and I do not accept any spiritual explanation of them. But don't let us talk about them now. They bore me, and they would n't amuse you.

B. You seem to consider the fact of the utter triviality of all that is written and rapped at tables to be sufficient proof that it does not come from

spirits. I agree with you in thinking that their utterances are not from the so-called spiritual world; but I do not see why we should expect spirits out of the body to have more intelligence than spirits in the body. We have no reason to think so. We know absolutely nothing in respect to the changes which take place after death. It may be that pure and refined spirits, freed from the body, ascend to higher existence; but in that case it is difficult to imagine that such spirits would return to rap out foolish statements at tables. But, on the other hand, there are many low, mean, contemptible spirits dwelling here in the flesh to whom the body may lend apparent respectability, and, stripped of this garment which conceals their inanity of intellect and baseness of desires, they may fall in the scale of being even below what they seemed here. Such spirits — of the earth earthy — would long for the gratifications of the sense and the flesh, and might be supposed to haunt the earth to which their desires cling, and grasp at any means of communication with it. Their heaven would be the heaven of the senses and of the life they had lost, and one would naturally expect from them lies, hypocrisies, and deceit of every kind. Freed from the body, the naked spirit would be what it desired: the high and pure of aspiration would therefore ascend to loftier planes of existence, the mean and base might descend even to lower. I only suggest this answer to any argument against spiritual communications founded upon

their triviality, feebleness, and absurdity. Let us clear our minds of distinctions between human beings and spirits. We are all spirits ; all our communications are spiritual. It is two spirits who talk together — not two bodies — here on earth. We have no warrant for the belief that the instant the spirit is freed from the body it necessarily leaves the earth — whatever be its condition — and becomes at once purified and beyond its influences. It may be or it may not be ; but it is certainly a possible supposition that they whose whole happiness, while here, has been in the joys of the body, and whose desires have been mean and depraved, may only continue to be possessed by the same desires, and long to regain the body through which they obtained their gratification.

M. It never struck me before in this light, but it certainly is an intelligible theory, whether it be correct or not. We all have faith in gradations of future being, and we believe that the spirit survives the body and retains its identity ; and why not suppose, if its preparation in this life has been for higher spheres, it would naturally ascend to them, while if it had been for lower spheres, it would equally descend to them ? If, after death, we retain an individuality, we naturally must remain what we inherently are, with the same desires, the same aspirations, the same tendencies. This would, if we accept it, enable the human being here to shape for himself his future sphere, by the training of his thoughts and aspirations to

what is lofty, pure, and refined on the one hand, or, on the other, to what is low, bestial, and degraded. We should thus reap what we ourselves have sown, and not be subject to any judgment and sentence outside of ourselves. Would not this recommend itself to our sense of perfect justice?

B. If we choose to take another step, we might suppose that repeated trials might be allotted to every spirit to climb up to higher spheres of existence by the purgation of its desires (since every spirit is what it desires), by its devotion to noble ends, by its constant experience that the low leads only to the low, by its sense of loss in consequence of its base aims.

M. In respect to these so-called spiritual communications by means of table-rappings, and all that, we shall never have the phenomena properly investigated so long as we begin with a theory. To set out with the assumption that all the material phenomena are occasioned by spiritual intervention is entirely unworthy of science and philosophy. But so strenuously is this theory advanced by believers that the minds of those who pretend to investigate them are warped at the beginning: on the one side are those who are inclined to the spiritual theory, and on the other those to whom such a theory is absurd and even worse; and both, for entirely opposite reasons, are averse to strict examination and investigation. The real question is, Do the facts exist or not? If so, how are they to be explained? If the facts clearly exist, it is

idle to reject them because a foolish theory is advanced to explain them. Are there any facts outside our common experience of the laws of nature so called? If there be, let us arrange them with calmness and honesty. On both sides, on the contrary, I find precipitation and impatience. Those disposed to the spiritual theory accept everything at once as spiritual. Those who are skeptical and unbelieving reject every fact as a cheat, without carefully investigating it or explaining it. It suffices the latter class on one or two occasions to detect a charlatan at work, or to encounter an entire failure of the experiment, to come to the conclusion that the whole thing is the result of charlatanism. But repeated failures or repeated cheating prove nothing. No scientific man would investigate any other question in the same spirit as he does this. If the matter were worthy of consideration at all, he would not be stopped in his researches by repeated failures to obtain his end. He would try again and again. He would not insist in the outset, for instance, that galvanism did not exist unless he could produce its effects in the way he chose. He would not insist on his own conditions, and assert that unless the results were obtained through them they did not exist at all. But this is what he constantly does in his professed investigation of so-called spiritual phenomena, because it is the term spiritual which annoys and disgusts him. If you recount to him any phenomena, perfectly material and physical, as having oc-

curred in your presence under conditions contrary to his preconceived opinions or experience, he says, It would not have occurred had I been there; or he smiles, and says, Ah, indeed! and thinks you are a fool. If you press the point, and ask him to explain it, and tell him the details, and show him that his explanation does not accord with the facts, he assumes at once that you were incapable of investigation, that you were humbugged, or that you lie. Humbug is the great word he uses — a very expansive one, which means anything or nothing. If you reply, How humbugged? where is the humbug? point it out — I desire to know as much as you; he declines to particularize, and prefers the generalization of — Humbug.

B. I cannot wonder at his condition of mind, nor fail to sympathize with his disgust at so much absurdity as is put forth by spiritualists in general.

M. Nor I; but, at the same time, he should, I think, preserve a more scientific and philosophic attitude, and not decide until he has thoroughly investigated. There may be nothing in all this; he may be quite right, only he has not examined the question sufficiently to decide upon it. For all he has seen and can explain there may be something. Of all these phenomena, some may be real and point to a law not yet understood. Are there any such? It is not, to my mind, sufficient to try a few casual experiments on absolute conditions, and to reject the whole if failure ensues. In sci

ence one does not expect the first tentative experiment to succeed. Suppose the experiment fails a hundred times and succeeds once, the important fact is the one success, not the hundred failures. The truth is that all begin with skepticism — not honest skepticism which neither believes nor disbelieves, which is ready to accept or reject according to the evidence and facts, but skepticism with a loaded bias to unbelief. There is no reason either for or against the existence of any phenomenon *a priori*. The mere fact that it is contrary to our experience is no proof that it does not exist. Suppose a community of blind persons to exist on an island which had never been visited by any person who saw, and suppose, by accident, a man with the power of sight should be thrown among them. How could he prove to them that this faculty really existed in him? He would at once be met by the statement that it was contrary to their experience, that no one they had ever heard of possessed such a faculty. Vainly would he reason with them. His exhibition of this faculty would be treated as humbug and charlatanism. He would say, for instance, Place a person fifty yards from me, and beside him any selected person in whom you have confidence. I will tell you without moving from here every action he makes. He would do this. What would be the answer? Would the blind be convinced? Not at all; they would say, You have a confederate; this knowledge is procured by a secret system of sounds and signs in-

telligible to the senses we all have, or by some method which we do not know; what we do know is that nobody can see. Or they would say, Let us lock you up in a room all by yourself, with no doors or windows, and chain you there, and then you must tell us what is done in another house by a person we will lock up there, or what is done in the street outside. If you answer, Under those conditions I cannot see, they would cry out, This proves it is all juggling. If you can't see as well in a box locked up at night as in the open air by day, you cannot see at all. There is no such power that exists; and though we do not detect the trick, it is nevertheless a trick. Don't you see that the seeing man in this case would be in a hopeless position? Suppose that there be anything real — I do not say there is — but suppose there be anything real in the phenomena of tables rising in the air, the person through whose mediumship they are executed is, to the scientific man of to-day, in a position quite analogous to that of the seeing man among the blind or the hearing among the deaf, provided they have no previous experience of such a faculty as sight or hearing.

B. You speak as if you believed in these phenomena. Do you?

M. I was not speaking of my belief, nor did I intend to indicate whether I believe in any of them or not. I merely meant to say that the spirit in which they are investigated is not what I wish it were.

B. But do you believe?

M. I believe what I have seen and what I have tested with all my senses. I mean the physical phenomena, for I have every proof of their reality that I have of anything, and I am not yet persuaded that I am an utter fool. But I do not undertake to explain them, much less do I accept the spiritual explanation. In my opinion there is quite as much stupidity in our incredulity as in our credulity. I cannot explain anything. It is an entire mystery how I see, how I hear, how I move my arm. Anatomists and scientific men explain to me the mechanism, and I understand that; but I do not understand how I set the mechanism in movement, nor they either. A man lives, sees, moves, one moment; the next moment he is what we call dead. The mechanism is the same, but the somewhat we cannot trace that moved it is gone. *A priori*, outside our experience one thing is as difficult to believe as another, and it is idle to attempt to set bounds to any operation of life by our experience. It is quite possible that we have subtle powers and faculties which have escaped our observation, and that are exercised at times unconsciously or only in certain abnormal conditions. Change for a moment the normal conditions of ordinary life, and instantly we have new phenomena, as in the case of madness, monomania, or delirium. In high fever the organs are far more susceptible than in health. What are you going to do with second-sight and ghosts, apparitions and premonitions?

Will you reject them all? Is there nothing in them? or will you say with Dr. Johnson, "All argument is against it, but all belief is for it"? Are there no such things as sympathies and antipathies which we cannot explain, and yet which to us are real? What is love? What is hate? No! we do not know anything yet; and there are, in my opinion, penumbral powers and senses surrounding our plain and definite ones, which we do not understand, and which we have not investigated. All I mean by this is, that it seems to me very foolish to cry out humbug at anything which is contrary to our common experience; and that it would be more scientific and honest to investigate calmly than to ridicule without investigation. And this is all I have to say, and don't let us talk any more about it. I am ready to believe anything if you can prove it properly. I am ready to disbelieve it if you can show that it has absolutely no foundation; but I do not begin by believing or disbelieving before careful examination. If I have not examined into it, I merely say I know nothing, or, as Montaigne did, "Que sais-je?"

B. I dare say you are perfectly right; but my own persuasion is that ninety-nine one-hundredths of all this spiritualism is utter charlatanry, and I think I am very generous in giving you up the one one-hundredth. Do you remember that medium who, after gathering a considerable number of persons together at one of his *séances*, and finding that several had obtained entrance without

paying for their tickets, rose — on a subsequent *séance* — before commencing his operations, and said, "I wish to make one observation — there 's nothing riles the spirits so as coming in without paying"?

M. I remember; and he was a very clever fellow, and knew what he was about. I have no doubt that the more money was paid the more his spirits were raised. But I admit that there are many charlatans of this kidney, and numbers of people whom they take in, and to whom the rubbish that is slowly rapped up at the table seems like inspired communications from the other world. My disgust at these fellows is quite equal to yours. I cannot use language too strong to express my abhorrence of those who, by lying arts, pretend to summon from the other world those who were dear as life to us, but who have passed away, and then put into their mouths those miserable lies. Think, for instance, of Charles Sumner's spirit being rapped up the other day, and giving this remarkable advice to his listeners, — "You must n't act selfish"!

B. Sometimes the messages rapped up are very amusing. Did you ever hear what the spirit of Dr. Webster, the murderer of Dr. Parkman, once rapped up to an astonished audience?

M. Never; but pray let me hear it.

B. Well, Webster, as you know, killed Dr. Parkman to avoid paying a debt due to him; and when the spirit of Dr. Webster presented itself at

the table and was asked, as usual, what he was doing in the spirit-world, his answer was that he was keeping a boarding-house, and that Dr. Parkman was living with him, without paying, until he should work off or eat up the debt.

M. That shows more ingenuity and intellect than one generally gets from the rapping spirits. If they would always be as amusing, I should like to attend some *séances*.

B. Yes, if they only would be a little amusing, it would be a relief; after all, they might make such fun of us here: what a chance for them! but they are so deadly serious and so sadly commonplace, that they are not good company. Heavens! only think of such a lot surrounding you in another world and you without a body to hide away in, or a key to your door, and all of them swarming in upon you with their futile remarks and sad commonplaces!

M. It would be worse than the mosquitoes in the Western States of America. Why do we always think of spirits as being so serious? Are we to lose all our sense of humor when we lose our bodies? Are we never to amuse ourselves? Is there nothing in the other world to correspond to the enjoyments of this? Are all our art and poetry to be utterly swept away? Are there to be no varieties of character and personality? Shall we never laugh? Worse than this. According to the old superstition, we artists shall be in a pretty mess; for all the graven images we have

made, and all the likenesses of things in the heavens, or the earth, or the waters under the earth, will, it has been said, become endowed with life, and pursue us, and haunt us, and torment us — a pleasant thought indeed! But what should I do there without art and poetry, and literature and music, and all these occupations and delights? Will there be no work for us to do, no books to read, no pictures to paint?

B. Music is, according to the general belief, admitted. We shall be able to sing. It will always be the same song; but we shall be able to sing it eternally; and we are told that we shall never tire of singing it. But as for painting pictures and modeling statues, I have never heard we should be allowed to do that.

M. I earnestly hope I shall have a body. I don't at all conceive how I could do without one. But every one tells me — and of course every one knows — that I shall not need a body, and that I shall be perfectly contented with doing nothing but sing. But how shall I sing if I have no body? What sort of preparation, then, are any of us making for such a world? If we are to be deprived of all means of exercising such faculties as we have spent our lives in training and cultivating here, what is the use of training and cultivating them at all? Why are these passionate desires given us here for what seems to us pure and noble, if, the moment we pass away from earth, they become perfectly useless? If to-morrow you were to de-

prive me of all these occupations, I should be very unhappy; and how can I be happy there deprived of them — that is, so long as I maintain my own identity and consciousness?

B. At all events, I hope I shall have some kind of a body to inhabit and use. It seems to me dreadful to think of wandering about, a mere naked spirit, with no house to cover one. In fact, without a body I should be nobody. The idea of being blown about by the wind, or of being open to invasion by every other spirit, without any power of secrecy of thought and feeling, is abhorrent to my notions. I do not care to keep this body if I can find a better; but this is better than none, and I have lived in it so long, and had so much happiness in it, that I have a sort of fondness for it. If I take a new one, I should like it fresher, better, and handsomer in every way, more quickly responsive to the spirit, and not so easily tired. I should like too to be able to go to sleep in it, and so make excursions from it into other regions, for of course I hope there will be upper regions still. And of all things I should hope to be able to be alone sometimes, if I chose. I like the odor of flowers. Do spirits smell? Are we to be out of our senses, so to speak? I hope not.

M. Did you ever read "The Gates Ajar," by Miss Elizabeth Stuart Phelps? She takes up this question and develops it in a most peculiar way and with much talent

B. Yes, I have read it; and I hear it is very

popular, as of course it would be. The vague notions of a future state of existence which are generally entertained are quite unsatisfactory; and I can easily understand that such a view as hers would recommend itself to many. To me her development of it is quite too material.

M. At all events, it does, after a peculiar fashion to be sure, recognize that the tastes, feelings, thoughts, and aspiration we cultivate here will not be utterly obliterated hereafter, and will find something hereafter to correspond to them. But come! our conversation has wandered widely enough, and it is time to break off. "Light thickens, and the crow makes wing to the rocky wood." Let us go and see it on the Pincio.

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